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✓ LIFE WORK;

OR,

THE LINK AND THE RIVET.

✓
BY L. N. R.,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK AND ITS STORY," AND
"THE MISSING LINK."

Mrs. Ellen Henrietta [✓]Ranyard

"I am the good shepherd—and I lay down my life for the sheep."—
JOHN x. 14, 15.

"Then shall thy life be for his life."—1 KINGS xx. 39.

"Even so we also should walk in newness of life."—ROM. vi. 4.

"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."—1 TIM. v. 6.

"That ye may shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of
life."—PHIL. ii. 15, 16.

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DEDICATED,

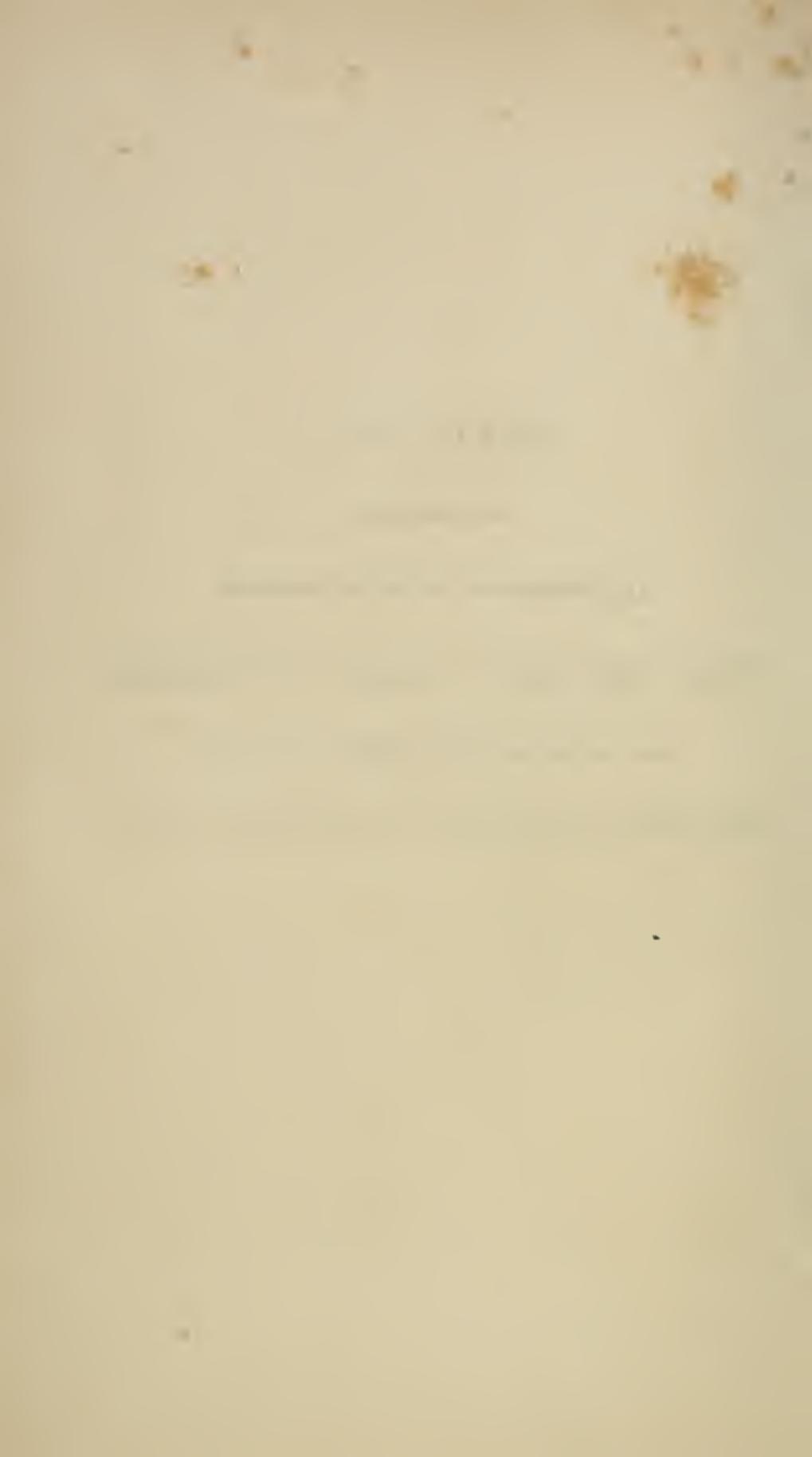
BY PERMISSION,

AS A TRIBUTE OF CHRISTIAN AFFECTION,

To the Right Hon. the Countess of Gainsborough,

WHO, AS ONE OF OUR "FRIENDS IN COUNCIL,"

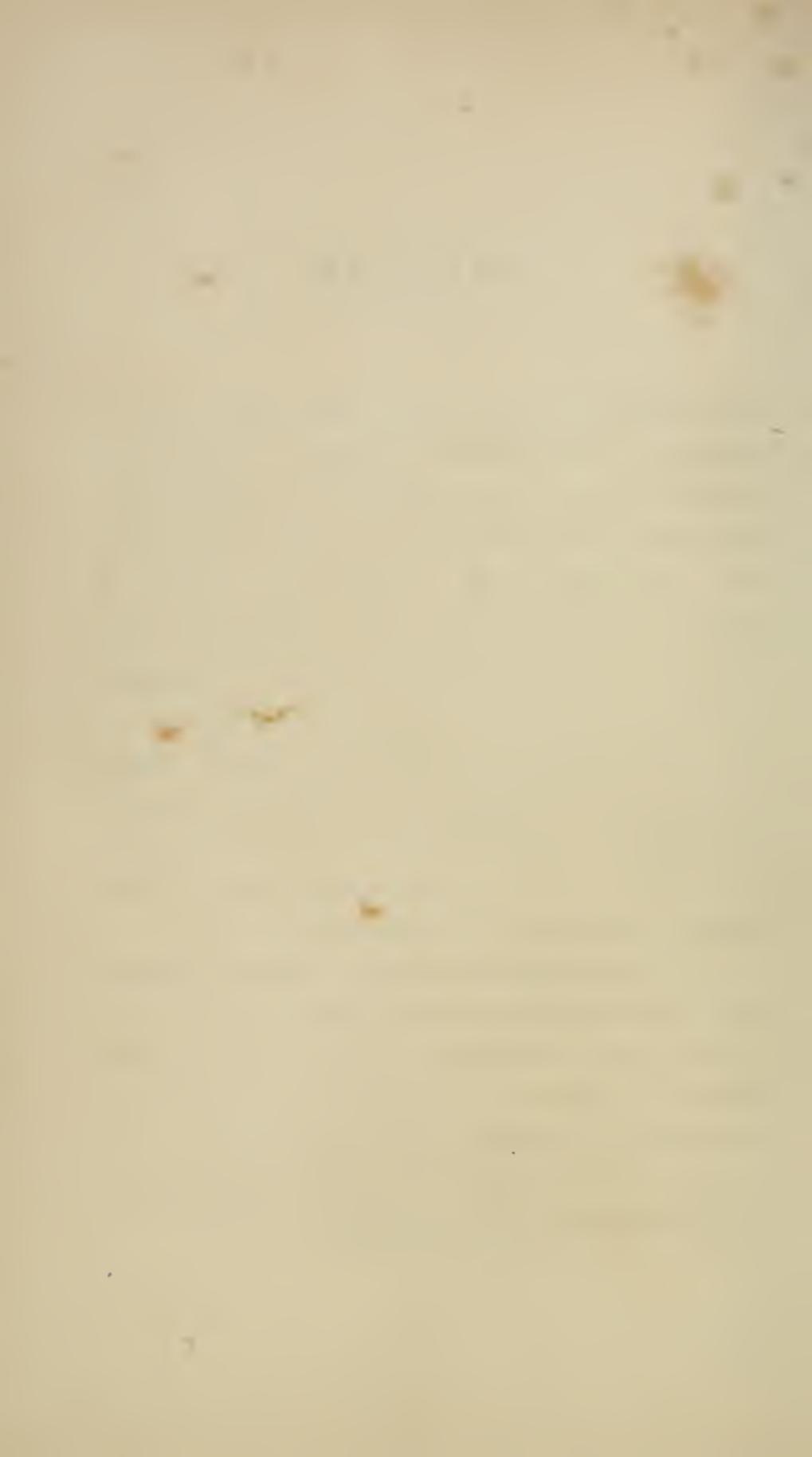
TAKES A PRACTICAL AND LOVING INTEREST IN THESE MISSIONS.



P R E F A C E.

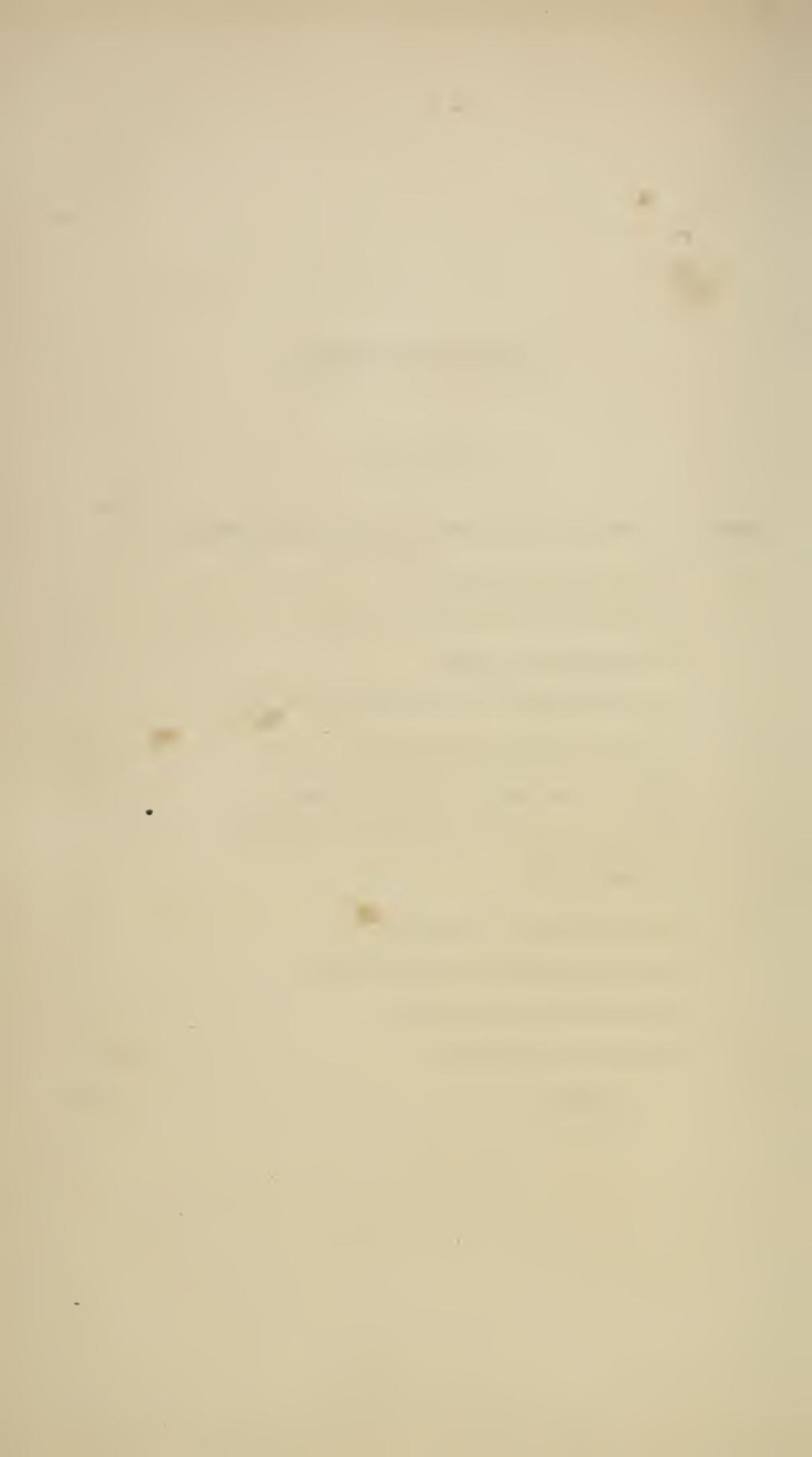
AT the close of a year and a half from the publication of "THE MISSING LINK," its readers may possibly desire to hear whether the Link has proved trustworthy. We, therefore, invite them to the perusal of a second little book, in which they will find the lights and shadows of life as it is. If the first volume has borne fruit by the blessing of God in the practical support and extension of the agency delineated, and has incidentally helped to break down prejudice against woman's work for Christ among Protestants, to which many friends bear testimony; we hope the present book will call forth, not only more money, but more workers, especially from the influential classes.

It has again seemed necessary to twine together, for those who do not read cheap periodicals, a selection of the facts which have appeared in the "BOOK AND ITS MISSIONS;" but these are re-grouped with many others, and chiefly as they might present a general view of the subject for those to whom "THE BIBLE AND DOMESTIC FEMALE MISSIONS" are yet unknown.



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CHAPTER I

The Hebrew Matron of the Book of Proverbs.

"A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death ;
The reason firm—the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect woman—nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command."

WORDSWORTH'S PORTRAIT.



DEVOTEDNESS to an object—purpose—as opposed to want of purpose, is acknowledged to make the difference between one man's life and that of another. But does it not equally do so between the life of one woman and another? We adventure not in this little volume to discuss the work of MAN—and thereby we trust to disarm his criticism—for we think the books especially wanted at this moment are those which shall aim to aid and guide the different departments of the work of WOMEN.

There is a good woman mentioned in the Bible,—in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, chiefly written by the wisest of men—whom God had set as the head of a household. Her reigning purpose is described to have been to “look well to the ways” of that household. She administered the means her husband provided to the best advantage. She arranged for the food and clothing of those dependent upon her in the way that their position warranted, and she no less exercised her love and care over their moral and spiritual existence, for her “children arose up to call her blessed.” She had not only a “life-work” in the inner circle of her own family, but she apportioned to *them* a life-work also, and the finger of in-

spiration distinctly points to an outer circle which its true lady has besides. It is not in the gay world, it is not among the daughters of pleasure : “She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ; she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.”

The lapse of three thousand years in the world’s history, and man’s “many inventions” during that period, have necessarily somewhat changed the *habits* of the descendant of her whose price is said to have been “above rubies,” but time should not have changed her *purpose*. She should still have a “LIFE-WORK ;” and, if spinning, weaving, and tapestry are no more the employment of dignified dames, she should still “bring forth of the fruit of her hands”—and when she has attended lovingly to all the claims of her own inner circle, she will, when she looks around her, find that the poor have not ceased out of the land, and that she must still “stretch forth her hand to the needy.”

If she possesses the thoughtful mind for which the Scriptures give her ancestor credit, she may look abroad on London, for instance, supposing that she dwells there, in the nineteenth century—in the year 1861—and consider what are the duties of herself and her compeers.

She will observe, we doubt not, even from the back windows of her costly mansion in a West End Square, that there is still much misery and squalor in “this Christian city.” The daily papers and many a private application for relief will shew her that there is yet a great deal left undone in the world, even quite close at

home, which she might help to do ; and with her husband—who, possibly, like the eastern emir, “ sitteth among the elders ”—she will, perhaps, converse in private on the best way to do it. How much she may help him, if he is one among the lawmakers, by acquainting herself with the real state and condition of the lowest of the people !

Her own clothing, as of old time, may be of “ silk and purple ; ” she will not, as of yore, have woven it herself, but we think she will very probably take an interest in those who did ;—in the rate of their wages—in their hours of work—in the education of their children—and, above all, in the welfare of their wives and mothers. Oh, those poor homes of Bethnal Green ! She will never forget them if she has seen them ; and, as she muses on the sufferings and hardships of their inmates, and on the duties the rich owe to the poor, will she not start, as we did, on first hearing the assertion made, that “ the charities of London are its curse ? ”

Ten years ago, such a saying would have been execrated, and yet the last decade of observation and experience has turned a stream as of electric light on facts which prove, that in the districts where most alms are given, the population is the most demoralised ;—mere relief of an ephemeral character makes way only for future petitions. Dependence on chance-favours destroys industry and virtue ; and the truest aim of a benevolent heart must be to help the people to help themselves, if we would not increase and prolong their misery.

As the leading feature in the portrait drawn by inspired wisdom is, that this was a woman who feared the Lord, we may conclude that her antitype, inheriting her qualities, will surely have taken part in the philanthropic and Christian societies of the time ; that she will have shared in the distribution of Holy Scripture, in the making of garments for the naked, and in some mode of investigating the cases of the necessitous on whom she desired to bestow her bounty.

If her habits are those of the wealthy classes in great cities, her tent for six months of the year will most likely be pitched in purer air, and under less murky skies, than those of the metropolis ; yet we may believe that she will not even then have forgotten city-missions ; and that some link will be established in her absence between herself and the duties she has left behind. Shall we err in supposing that in this age of many books, and more readers, she will have met with one entitled “Ragged Homes, and How to Mend Them ?” and that she may have been led to hail the experiment delineated in the pages of “The Missing Link ?” This year we once more present ourselves before her, and entreat her to bestow her high purpose of character more earnestly than ever in God’s service, and to give us “LIFE-WORK,” no less—in the riveting of that “Link.” Its “rivet” will consist in the firm and loving guidance of a lowly agency amid its temporal purposes for the benefit of the poor, ever onward and upward to its higher aim—the mission of the Divine Book to their souls.

CHAPTER II.

Contrasts—"To Trifle, and to Suffer."

"Alas! what do they know who have not suffered?"

MADAME DE STAEL.

"'Twas a land where earthly pride was not,
Where the poor were brought to mind,
With their scanty bed, their fireless cot,
And their bread so hard to find."

THE BORDER LAND.



SHALL we venture on a word to the “upper ten thousand?” Our hearts are very much drawn towards them by the few who have come forth from their charmed circle to think on the wants of “the sunken sixth”—who have chosen this for their “life-work”—and who, when they lay aside their earthly coronets, will do so only to receive the crown of life from Him who will say, “I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME,” (Matt. xxv. 35, 40.)

Let us, then, solicit the ear, for a moment, of one of the lovely butterflies who flit and glitter in the fairy-land of wealth and fashion. If she deigns to listen, we have a question to propose to her.

“Fair lady, have you still a heart?” The purpose of your life has long been spent on trifles—most exquisite trifles! You live in a world of colour and light, of jewels, and gossamer dresses of all rainbow hues; and your delight in them is varied by their fleeting

successes in your kingdom of admirers. But have you any heart left? Did you ever wish to live for anything beyond your own amusement,—your own dress, dinners, and accomplishments, or the prospect of their graceful repetition in the lives of your children?

There are many who will reply, “We never do. Vex us not with impertinent suggestions. Dress *is* a great resource to us. We understand its science, we rejoice in its fitness to occasion, we make it a study. So also of the elegant appointments of our houses. It is true that we *do* revel in the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, though we believe our godfathers and godmothers renounced them for us at our baptism. We have no objection to read about ‘Missing Links,’ and ‘Ragged Homes,’ but as to ‘Life-Work,’ we leave that to the working classes!”

So onward sails the butterfly—her thoughts all bent on *time*, and *earth* her *home*! Yet we are not sure but that even for her, an hour may come of hidden longings for a nobler sphere of existence; and in case it ever should, we will persist in letting her know how much work there is in the world to be done, and how she might help to do it.

The poor so often say to the Bible-women,—“I never thought till now; no woman ever taught me before this!” Oh! daughters of frivolous and worldly mothers, have any ever taught *you* to live for Christ, to be *devoted* to His service? (“*vouée*,” as the Romanist would say). Yet it is in woman’s better nature to be this. She is formed to be devoted to

some one,—queen of some kingdom ; and it is to the longing for something better to do or to be—to the same weariness which is uttered in that prolonged sigh of Solomon's in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity of vanities, *all* is vanity,"—that Rome owes some of her new converts in the nineteenth century, among the children of this world, living *without a purpose* ; yet they need not pass over to Rome for that reason, or even stay in its border-land of earnestness concerning forms and rituals.

A kingdom lies about their doors—a kingdom of darkness—in which there are as yet but few lights kindled. The kind of agency named the Missing Link has pioneered the way for woman to seek after woman in that gloom. Two far-off classes of society have yet to meet together there ; and, by their united prayers and efforts, in the delivery of a message from on high, to shed daylight on that darkness.

Would it be possible, for once, to forego the park-drive, where you meet only with your own order, and are apt to forget that there exist any people who do not keep carriages ? Do you think you could permit a Bible-woman to introduce you, in inconspicuous dress, to so very different a place as Whitecross Street, in the heart of our city of London ? You need have no fear in her company. When she has been some time in the district, and is the right kind of person, the people will often run for *her* to settle a quarrel, especially between fighting women, instead of for the police.

As we thread the maze of this long, dingy, narrow

street, still further narrowed by its rows of market-stalls, you will look up to the sky overhead, and wonder how long it is since the free air of heaven played there.

Well, for that time you must probably go back to the great fire of London in 1666, when this place, now so densely populated, was part of a fen, or moor; to which space the inhabitants of the burning city came forth from their 10,000 flaming houses, and were glad to lodge in small huts, built in Fensbury and Moor-fields, as on other spots without the walls. In the still earlier times of Henry II., “a great fen, or moor,” we are told by Fitzstephen, watered the walls of the city on the north side, stretching from the wall betwixt Bishopsgate and Cripplegate, to Finsbury and Holywell. When the moor was frozen, it was a great place of resort for the young Londoners, with their primitive skates, formed of the leg-bones of animals (one of which bone-skates is still to be seen in the museum of Mr Roach Smith).

In the year 1415, the Moorgate postern was made in the wall, and Moorfields was searched for clay to make bricks, which were burnt on the spot. In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the moor was drained, laid out in walks, and planted pleasantly with trees. Then came the time when, as above, the houseless people took refuge there under tents and hovels, and, in the ensuing year, the fields were built upon and paved.

Finsbury Square and Finsbury Circus have yet pre-

served free spaces like those of olden time, but as for these streets and lanes, it seems as if one would never come to the end of them. It is an escape from the bustle among the fruit and fish-stalls, to turn into some one of the little side courts or alleys. Perhaps you will forget the unpleasant walk through the crowded street in the lesson you may learn in one of these courts, of thankfulness for God’s mercies. Do you remember in “The Missing Link,” (p. 164,) a poor cripple who thanked God for “that great blessing that He had left her—the use of one thumb?” It is her we have come to see. We have climbed the narrow, winding stairs, and taken refuge from the dust and noise outside in old Sarah’s clean, quiet, airy room. There she lies, or rather sits, in bed, with her whole body contracted and curled together, as cholera, rheumatism, and poor living together have combined, for thirty years, to twist it; but with such a bright, cheerful face, and such a pleasant, emphatic voice, that you will be willing to speak with her, we are sure. Will you like to know something of her history?

She is a true Londoner, and has not even any childish memories of the occasional summer holidays which, now in London, in this age of philanthropy, brighten a poor child’s life; work, hard work, and long hours of labour, are her earliest recollections. At her father’s death she left a little place of all-work for the family employment of weaving haircloth, followed from five in the morning till ten at night. She was the eldest of many children, and, after that hour, had to

scrub the floor of their room, which, because she did it more thoroughly on Sundays, she made an excuse for not accompanying her mother to a place of worship. She remembers the rattle of the old tin-kettles from their high window-sill, which a watchman pulled by a string, at their request, to wake the weary to their early toil each morning ; but she has never in her life seen a hay-rick, a wood, or a corn-field. Two years ago, however, one friend brought her a few ears of corn, and another some acorns. The longest journey she has undertaken in one direction has been made to Islington Church, and in the other to St George's-in-the-Borough, when the sight of the water, in crossing the bridge, made her feel giddy.

To a frame thus nurtured in the city's heart came cholera in its primary visit to our metropolis. This victim did not die of it, though she never recovered from its collapse, and here she lies ever since. Perhaps we remark to her that she is “all alone.”

“Yes,” she replies, in a peculiarly sweet and cheerful voice, “I am alone, and yet not alone.”

“How is that?”

“I feel that the Lord is constantly with me.”

This is verified by such an expression of calm happiness on her countenance as was seen in the faces of many of the converts during the recent revivals in Ulster.

“How long have you lain there?”

“For sixteen years and four months, and for two years and four months I have not been lifted out of

my bed to have it made, yet I have much to praise and bless the Lord for.”

“What is the source of your happiness?”

“The thought that my sins are forgiven, and my dwelling on the great love of Jesus, my Saviour; I am content to lie here as long as it shall please Him that I should stay, and to go whenever He may call me. But oh! how wonderful it seems to me that I should be continued here, while those who are young and active are taken away! Four young persons, who used to call upon me, have been taken home within the last six weeks. I have to thank God that I have reason to believe that one of them was led to Jesus by her visits to me.”

“That is truly something to be thankful for.”

“Yes; and see how God has left to me the use of one thumb,” and she opens and closes her thumb on her crooked and folded fingers.

“Have you also lost the use of the other hand?”

“Entirely.” We see that the left hand is clenched and stiff, utterly useless.

“How is she attended to?” you ask.

“I have two kind neighbours,” she says, “who come in by turns to bring me my breakfast, and to set me to rights.”

Just then, perhaps, a little neat elderly woman, with a very kind expression of countenance, will come in to make up her fire.

“Your friend seems happy,” we say.

“Yes; she is always cheerful.”

“Do you come and sit and chat with her sometimes?”

“No; I can’t leave my work.”

“Could you not bring your work up here, and keep her company while you do it?”

“No; it’s washing. I do, now and then, when I have a stocking to mend, come and sit by her side on summer evenings.”

Summer evenings and winter nights! God has cared for poor “Sarah” through them all, for sixteen years, and caused her two neighbours to care for her. The most rigid economy has been necessary; and, however long the dark hours, she never burns a candle, except in illness. If friends drop in upon her, they sometimes bring their own light with them. She says she can think in the dark on the promises of the Lord.

“And you are really never lonely through those many hours,” we repeat; “never lonely and never afraid?”

“No,” she replies, “but my kind neighbour, when she was out in her backyard, had a careful thought for me some years ago. ‘There lies poor Sarah,’ said she; ‘there is no light from her small square window, near the head of her bed; she lies all alone, she shall have my clock for company.’ So she brought me the clock, and a very great comfort it was to me to hear it tick and to see how the time went—but afterwards it stopped; we tried to have it mended, but she feared it was a deception, sold to her by an American that went about with such things; still I liked to look at it for her kindness’ sake.”

“How long is it since you began to love Jesus?”

“When I lost my poor mother, and had not a friend beside; then I turned to Him, and He ‘took me up,’* and He has ever since been ‘my Shepherd.’ Oh, how I love His Word!”

“Where is your old Bible? the one you had before the Bible Society gave you that large one?”

“A friend took that away, who said he would have it now I had got a new one; but I miss it, somehow, for I had marked it with a pencil everywhere, so that there was no more room to mark; and though its print was small, I lifted its leaves with my fork easier than this big one. I went without butter and sugar, too, to pay a penny a-week to get it.”

“You said the Lord was your Shepherd?”

“Yes; that is quite a true name for Jesus. ‘I shall not want,’ my own life can shew THAT, and ‘not want any good thing.’ Oh, how often God has sent me the very thing I desired! Once my sister came to my bedside with a mouldy crust, and said, ‘See, here is all that the parish will give you.’ I told her not to mind, to cut out the crumb, and wipe the crust with a clean cloth, and if there was any butter, to scrape it together; for I was glad to have even this. While my sister was doing as I said, there was a knock at the door; I made a sign to her with my fork, for she is very deaf, and who should be there but a lady, who said she had just seen a baker put the bread into his

* “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.”—PSALM xxvii. 10.

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window, and she thought a little crusty loaf would make a nice breakfast for her poor friend."

The string of the loving-kindness of the Lord once touched, note after note prolongs the song of praise.

"God makes people so very kind to her, the longer she lies there the more kind He makes them. For six weeks in succession, last year, half-a-cwt. of coals were sent in to her every Saturday, and she could never discover the donor."

She describes how unexpectedly they came, her surprise at the gift, and how welcome they were.

She has not always lived in this room, but a fire broke out in the court where she formerly resided, and her very curtains were in flames, when the neighbours removed her, like a bundle in a blanket, to this safe place. They had put up her bed again for her before night.

A little while after this enforced removal of her lodging, which seems to have been an exchange for the better, she heard that the church-warden of her former district was to be married, and he had said that every poor old woman who had tea and sugar tickets from the church, should have a bright new shilling and double tickets for a fortnight; but she, poor thing, although only by a stone's throw, was now "not in his parish," and there would be no shilling and no tickets for her. She was very sad when she heard this, and although "she cried not, she could not help grieving all day; indeed, that night she had little sleep, for she knew she had not much breakfast to expect the next

morning. Was it possible? She had almost doubted the Lord."

In the morning she heard a knock at her door, and on saying, "Come in," a gentleman answered, "It is very early to disturb an invalid, but I thought I would just leave this parcel on my way to the City," so "he placed what he had brought on that chair you see there," she says, pointing with her fork. She could not rise to open it, or call any one else to do so, and it seemed a long, long time till her kind neighbour came up-stairs and brought it to the bed and untied it, and what should be in it but half-a-pound of tea, half-a-pound of coffee, a pound of loaf-sugar and a pound of moist! How she did thank God, and mourn that she could have doubted Him! And that was not all, for after breakfast, a friend, who had promised to try and see that she should not be excluded from the churchwarden's list, but had not succeeded about the tickets, brought her, still further to reprove her faithlessness, the bright new shilling.

Now she has another story for you. Her life was three times threatened by an impatient relative who had the care of her at one period. Sometimes the poor are selfish, and very weary of the existence which is a burden to them. This woman was one morning almost driven to desperation by the low price she had obtained for shirtmaking, and went away declaring, that when she came home "she would finish" poor Sarah. She went out for cat's-meat, and Sarah lay still, praying. On her return she sat herself down, bleeding, by

the fireplace. She had run a hook into her own foot, and was, for that time, disabled from doing injury to the poor cripple. At another period she declared she would knock her on the head, and rose to do so, but striking the bed-post in her fury instead; put her own shoulder out. A third attempt was made, and quite as suddenly defeated by the providence of God, of which being at last convinced, that person has since become more friendly, and old Sarah is not now in her power.

We ask her if she is in sympathy with any other person who is a cripple? She says, “Yes, she is. She often lies and thinks of a poor girl in an hospital, on the other side of London, of whom a lady who visits them both has told her.” This girl had lost the use of her limbs through the cruelty of her stepmother, who had kept her, when a child, shut up for months in a stone kitchen, without fire, as a punishment; feeding her only on potato-parings and tea-leaves. One day she left the door open, and this wretched child got out into the area and screamed. A man passing heard her, and seeing the deplorable, scarcely human, object, called the police. The stepmother was sent to prison for two years, and everything was done to restore the poor girl to health. She recovered the use of her fingers, and can do beautiful embroidery work, whereby she partly supports herself.

We have just produced a little woollen shawl, one which has been to spare from a large parcel most kindly sent for the Bible-women. Fair hands knitted

it with true love for this Female Mission, and we know they will allow of this one deviation in the direction of their useful handiwork. A linsey petticoat, which has likewise been sent for Mission use, will now aid to keep the poor feet warm. These both happen to be just what she wants, as her clothing is very thin for cold weather. Her bed looks so neat, the sheets and cap quite clean, her face fair, and almost without a wrinkle, with her white hair combed back from her forehead, and happy peace written on her brow. We bless the kind neighbours whose three visits a-day thus give help to the helpless. May God reward their labour of love! One of these women has been a widow sixteen years. She, too, has trusted in God, and He has always cared for her, though often she has not known what she should live on the next day, or even what she should eat for the next meal. The cold weather is just setting in, and another friend has sent Sarah a warm rug for a coverlet. This proves an inexpressible comfort, and she thought the first night of its added warmth "was Paradise," and remarked, "How was it that she lay so sheltered and comforted, when her Saviour had not where to lay His head?"

If we inquire into her definite means of support, she replies—"I have 4s. 6d. a-week from the parish; 2s. I pay for my room, and 1s. to my sister for cleaning it, and then there is washing, coals, and food. One kind friend allows me 6d. a-month, and sometimes I am on the Aged Pilgrim's Friend Society for five or six weeks; while I am upon it I have 1s. 6d. a-week." Sarah has

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two meals a-day, and in the evening one cup of tea, but nothing to eat, for she can do as well without it. Friends are kind in taking her occasional nourishment. “Yesterday a lady brought in two such nice chops,”—but it is none the less living by faith, and most truly she can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

We notice something like an old book hanging at the back of her door, and ask her what it is. “Oh, that is a Missionary-box for the City Mission to the poor people round here.” (Well may she think of HOME MISSIONS!) “My Missionary opens it sometimes, and he finds a great many pence in it. If I cannot give to it myself, my friends put in something for my sake.”

Oh, what joy lights up her face as we speak of the present times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit! “That He should have suffered *her* to live to hear of these days!” she says. She longs, in her helplessness, to be “an ambassador for Christ;” a “worker together with Him,” beseeching men that they receive not the grace of God in vain. Perhaps she may speak of God’s mercies to a wider circle than she dreams of.

The sympathy received for poor Sarah from those who have heard her story has been perfectly amazing, and shews how much affectionate feeling can be drawn forth, to an individual case, from all quarters of the kingdom. If we had complied with every desire to *see* her, we should have run the risk of spoiling her, or kill-

ing her with excitement. We have provided her with what was a real necessity,—a new bed and clean bedding, and have yet wherewithal to increase her weekly comforts for a little time to come. We could have hung her room round with the clocks that have been offered for her.

Once we received a letter in large hand, with a shilling's worth of stamps. “THIS SHILLING IS FOR POOR SARAH, AND WAS GIVEN TO ME FOR DOING MY SUMS QUITE PERFECT.” Dear little man, his mamma says “the sums alluded to were the result of many days' perseverance with this end in view.”

“The neighbours” have rejoiced in all help sent for Sarah, and *she*, more than over any good to herself, in some kind notice of their free service rendered to “the neighbours.” She takes it all as from the hand of her heavenly Father. One of these good women said, (while we were removing Sarah to the nice new bed, which she had watched being put together as if she were in a dream,) “This is very different to the time when I used to come up to you, and think you were in a grave; no candle, no fire, poor thing, or only a little fire lit now and then.” “Ah,” she answered, “I was not *so very* cold then, though I did not know what it was to be so warm as I am now. God has always been good to me. His mercies have been mounting up from the time I was ready to eat, and be thankful for, that mouldy crust, (and I did not have to eat it after all); but now I am lost quite, in wonder, love, and praise.”

24 CONTRASTS—"TO TRIFLE, AND TO SUFFER."

Nothing has been more touching, except the sympathy of the young with her true story, than the voice which has reached us from many a bed of languishing like her own. The recital of her story, as told in the "Book and its Missions," has answered its end, for it has cheered and strengthened many a one set apart to suffer in the higher walks of life. Old Sarah values every mercy in her afflicted lot. The little four-pane window at the head of her bed, throws the light upon her Bible, and makes it easier for her to read, and the window opposite, though it only looks into a small court, "makes it so cheerful." The sunshine, as it lights upon her wall, reminds her of the "Sun of Righteousness;" and the moonbeams, as they stream in and silver the darkness of her evenings, carry her thoughts up to Him who has lighted the darkness of her soul. She "*enjoys the dark*" to think over what she has read in the day, or we have had many an offer of candle or lamp to dissipate it. We have not told her she has been written about. She has a general sense that, somehow or other, by the kindness of many distant friends for whom we ask her to pray, these fresh mercies are bestowed upon her, and the answer she made may go forth to all. We shall never forget the emphasis with which it was uttered. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it UNTO ME." "UNTO ME," she repeated. "Wonderful! but it is so, for HE says it."

And this is but *one* case cared for amid the masses of the London poor.

Every one whose habit it has been to seek for those children of God who are hidden in dull back streets, and never push themselves into notice, has found in the course of their lives some "living epistle of Christ," deserving to be known and read of all men. And why? because their histories shew, in ever varied language, the power of His love, who can be all in all to His people. The less they have on earth to comfort them, the more He can reveal to them of heaven begun below.

Shall we pay a visit to another quiet room, where, as "by the side of still waters," in the midst of the city's dust and din, we may learn a lesson that shall refresh our souls?

Our search is now in Drury Lane, once tenanted by the noble and the gay, but of which the poet subsequently and truly says—

"Oh may thy virtue guard thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts and dark abodes."

Nearly opposite the grand theatre fresh risen from its ashes, let us turn into one court out of Bow Street, and up another, where we find many a house once in the possession of the wealthy, but now let out in separate rooms, from top to bottom. At one door we notice five bells for the five floors; the stairs are clean, and the flights many. Ascending to the highest, we

enter a room, in which a tent-bed has dark curtains drawn almost all round it.

On that bed lies another great sufferer—Ann J——. A short time since the welcome hand of death seemed about to release her from her long life of sorrow. It is now thirty-one years since the day when, in hurrying to open the door to a doctor, she fell down-stairs with a child in her arms; the babe was unhurt, but she suffered concussion of the brain, and has never since that period known an hour free from pain. She had then a kind husband, a Christian man, who had everything done that could be done, within his power, to relieve and comfort her. When he died, sixteen years ago, she lost her all, and was left with three daughters, one of them deformed, and very weakly.

Previously to this loss, she herself attempted to do a little needle-work, lying on her back; but a large tumour formed round her neck, and she has now lain for sixteen years with her head in a plate, to preserve it from the heat of the pillow,—a proof of how much, and how long, poor human nature may suffer and not die; and a proof that a soul inhabiting such an afflicted body may yet praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. We think we never heard a testimony to the *goodness* of God so fervent as we often have from within those curtains.

It is said of the Most High, in the 33d Psalm, that "from the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth;" that "His eye is upon them that hope in His mercy," and that their hearts

shall rejoice in Him, *because they have trusted* in His holy name.

If so, then the eye of a loving Lord is on this attic in D—— Court. You shall hear the witness that that text is true from its humble occupants.

We will ask if we may speak to the sufferer, through the closely-drawn curtains. She seems to have a constant sense of suffocation from the tumour, added to the intense pain in her head. She cannot speak above the lowest whisper, so that we hardly hear what she says, but the very soft voice and the expressions used would give the impression that she has been an educated person, before she fell into her present state of distress.

If we inquire how long this struggle has lasted, and remark, that it will soon be over, and that we suppose she will be quite willing to go home ; she raises her hand in a manner that gives emphasis to the "Oh yes," which she can hardly utter.

"And," we add, "quite willing to stay as long as it shall please God to detain you on this bed of pain?" We listen for her answer, till she breathes out, "Hardly so ! I am longing to depart. My sufferings have been so intense. The waves and the billows have gone over me ! Oh, to be released!"

We then tell her of poor "Sarah," who has been confined to her bed for sixteen years, and cannot raise her hand to her mouth, yet is so happy in her solitude, that she declares she would not change places with the Queen—a happiness which arises from know-

ing that her sins were forgiven, and feeling assured that Jesus has loved her. She raises her hand in the same expressive way.

"That poor woman, who has been so long confined to her bed, is," we say, "willing to stay or go, just as it shall please the Lord." She makes another expressive motion with her hand.

"She had a blanket given her during the cold weather, and as she felt it so warm and comfortable, she could not help thinking of Him who had nowhere to lay His head."

"Oh, I also delight to meditate, as I lie here, on the sufferings of my Saviour!" she feebly whispers. "I have been in this state thirty-one years, come May."

"Thirty-one years is indeed a long time to look forward to, or even to look back upon, now; but a thousand years hence, when you think about it, it will appear but as a 'light affliction, enduring for a moment, and then eternity will hardly be begun.'" (Another elevation of the hand).

We have quoted the text, "In my Father's house there are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you."

"Yes," she says, with all the energy her feeble frame will allow, "*that's a reality!*"

Do we not feel as if we ourselves had been convicted of repeating the text without believing it? so great is the emphasis of those few words.

Her feeble daughter, on whom their support mainly depends, and who suffers from spinal complaint and

asthma, had lately been too ill to work at her business of dressmaking, and they had begun to feel the pressure of want. A gentleman, also, who for three years had kindly given them occasional help, had just gone away to reside in France. She, therefore, expresses her deep gratitude to God for a new friend, and the daughter's reply to the assistance we afforded was, "This is as if it came straight from the clouds." The promise of an extra half-crown a-week was received as if it were in their sight unbounded riches.

We have told her the benefit received by those who are allowed to minister to her is probably greater than to herself, for they, seeing her confidence in God, in her heavy affliction, will be encouraged afresh to trust in Him. This idea fills her pleasant brown eyes with tears of joy. "I do cast," she says, "all my care upon Him, but I feel dark at times. Yet what a mercy it is, that during all these years I have never had my bed taken from under me! I often thank God for that."

She then mentioned how she rejoiced to hear of the prayer-meetings during the first week in January, all over the world; that she has sent requests that she might be remembered in the supplications, and also notices of the cases of some for whom she desired the prayers of the servants of God. Christian friends brought accounts of the meetings to her, so she was continually present in spirit, and her fervent prayers ascended from that lone room in unison with those world-wide supplications.

As she is obliged to be continually screened from the light, she cannot see to read a small Bible for herself, and her poor daughter is often too ill to read aloud. Her little granddaughter now reads to her in a very large print copy of the Psalms we have supplied her with. The Word of God is very precious to her, even as conveyed through the broken spelling and hesitating utterance of the simple child. Its mother was the babe in arms when Ann J—— met with her accident. This little one is a great comfort to her, and she hopes a good work of God is going on in her heart. They would not know what to do without this “ministering child,” who fetches everything for them, and runs up and down stairs as the daughter could not.

One of the kind superintendents of our “DOMESTIC MISSION,” to whom the care of this case had been partly referred, recently wrote to us as follows:—“In the summer you commissioned me to find out in what way it would be most desirable to help Ann J——. It then appeared as if she needed more nourishment, and little delicacies, such as were impossible for her to procure. I therefore undertook to supply them on behalf of the mission. When I sent the first half-pint of custard, and asked if she had liked it, the daughter answered, ‘Oh yes; she drank it *all* the same evening.’ From week to week she has had jellies and custards, and small helps to appetite, which seem to have supported her amid unspeakable pain and suffering, so severe, indeed, as to prevent her from seeing any one but her daughter.

"When, after two or three calls, I found it would be hopeless to expect an interview, I ceased calling ; but a few weeks since she sent me word that she very much wished to see the lady whose jellies and custards had done her so much good.

"I went accordingly, and hope I may never forget the impression that visit made upon me. The daughter crept to the bed and whispered who had arrived, and then beckoned me to come very gently to her mother's side. The state of her nervous system renders her hearing so acute that all sound is excruciating. The room was so darkened that I could see nothing for several moments. At last I perceived a thin white hand extended towards me, of which I took hold, hoping soon to find where the head of the poor sufferer lay ; she drew me down with her hand, and whispered, '*My Lord will reward you.*' I cannot express to you the solemn reverence which then seemed to come into my soul, as if I were in the presence of one who lived close to God, and spoke with such confidence of *her* Lord, and with such certainty that *her* Lord *would* reward all that had been done for *HIS* sake.

"I then said, 'Is it not a real pleasure to serve *HIM*, whether by doing or suffering?' She said, 'Oh yes. He is so good to me. He has put it into the hearts of kind friends to send me help ever since I've been worse. Oh, how I love Him! He is with me here ; I could not lie here without *HIM*.' After a little more conversation in the lowest whisper, which became at last inaudible, she pressed my hand to her lips

very lovingly. It is impossible to describe the touching solemn scene of that still chamber. I came away feeling as if I had been very near the gate of heaven, and had been communing with one who was almost home.

“That interview with this sanctified child of God, I count one of the many blessings which it has pleased God to give me during the past year, in visiting for this mission.”

It is but little that can be done to mitigate the extreme suffering of this case. It has been long known to various Christian friends, who have not wearied in administering each a little help—and when some have refrained a while, others have filled their place. There is nothing more astonishing than the way in which God supports these helpless ones. The ravens fed Elijah at His command, and His poor are not forgotten any more than His prophet. “They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” Each day of suffering, borne in meekness, cuts a fresh facet to the gem,—“patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer,” and earnest in trust, they are being fitted to shine in the Redeemer’s crown—even to enter the Redeemer’s kingdom.

“If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into your hearts,” poor Sarah and Ann, “to conceive what the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him.”

And now having brought together those who have

lived to suffer, and those who have hitherto lived to trifle, can the latter turn away from these beds of pain ever to trifle more? They have here seen Jesus, and the power of His Word. Deprived of all that you would say tends to make life beautiful or useful; rich only in the passive graces of patience and submission; though rich also in faith in their Lord's treasury; their life is one long utterance of "Thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven." You come to look on them that you might learn to sing the same song—to take up the note from their lips—and prolong it in the midst of your youth and strength, with your health, and perhaps wealth, by a life of active service to the same Master. They can stir neither hand nor foot, but you can. Their suffering life is full of peace, and purpose, for His glory. Shall not yours, with all its gifts and blessings, be also given to Him? How much you have to bring Him more than they! If you have seen Him in this valley of the shadow—if He shall have called you to Him, as you witnessed His love and His power manifested to these, your poor sisters—begin your "Life-Work" from to-day.

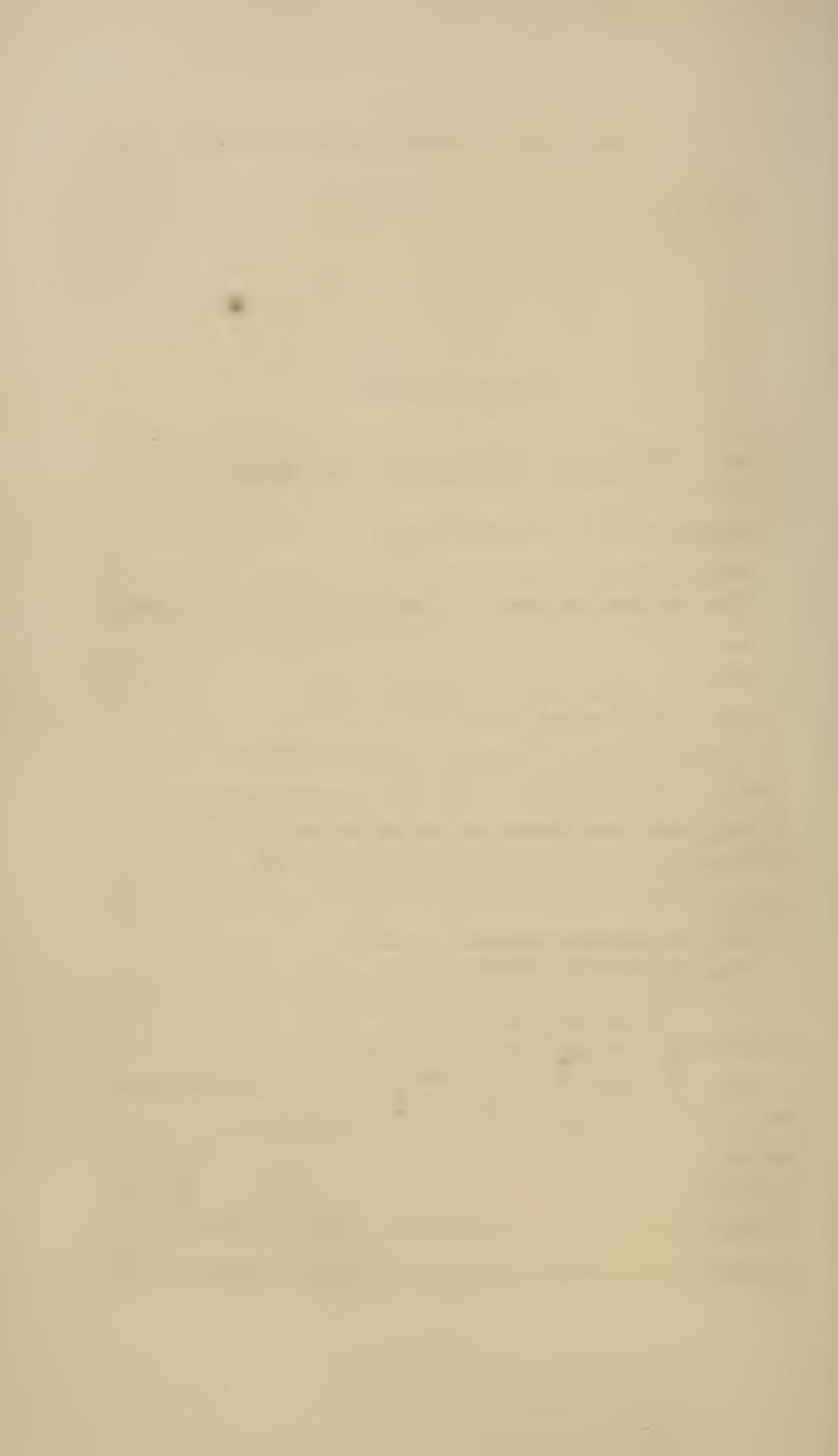
CHAPTER III.

Missing Links, and their Rivet.

“The Lord gave the word : great was the company of those **that**
published it.”—PSALM lxviii. 11.

“In thunder tones to trembling Israel
Did God first give the word ;
In after-years, from prophet harps inspired,
The SPIRIT’s voice was heard ;
And then, JEHOVAH-LORD, thou didst draw near,
Gently and unperceived, to human ear—
Thy mighty Godhead, robed in fleshly veil,
And left Evangelists to tell the tale.

“Thy chariots, myriads of angels be ;
They utter’d first the word ;
Since then upon how great a company
Is the same gift conferr’d !
And, as of yore did hoary Sinai bow,
The whole earth moves to meet Thy presence **now** ;
Wider and wider still, each opening morn
The solemn witness of that word is borne.”



THE readers of the “Missing Link,” and those who have in the past year—unsolicited except by the force of facts—contributed more than **SIX THOUSAND POUNDS** to the Female Missions, which have taken the above short title, have a right to ask after the year’s work—and the answer is ready. Our first book told them of thirty-seven districts so occupied; the present can tell them of one hundred and fifty. It can tell them also of principles tried and tested. The Link has, in general, been found trustworthy, but just in proportion to the strength of the Rivet that attached it to the chain—the chain let down from heaven—of that Saviour’s love, who, if “He be lifted up,” has said that He will “draw all men unto Him.”

The Link—the Missing Link—yes, thank God, we have found it. He has added it to the other links of His mercy, in the day of His power. He has shewn us how to minister of His Word to the lowest among women—by women often taken from among themselves. Christ’s mission, when on earth, was “to seek and to save that which was lost,” and now He has thrust forth fresh labourers into His vineyard, has placed **HIS MESSAGE** in their hands, and, keeping them

to THAT—not their own words, but HIS—has bade them, with a new and loving *faith* in their message, go and witness for Him in these last days.

And the agency is now a year older. We, who sympathised with, and guided the first missionary in her work, have earned further experience of that work in more than a hundred channels. The first year taught us *the power of the poor woman with the poor*; the second, the eminent necessity of *finding her a sister in effort from the class of her superiors*, who should be minutely responsible for all money transactions, and who should share the labour of love as the heart of a loving lady can share it.

How could a poor uneducated woman—pressed upon, too, by hundreds of applicants, with the pertinacity of Old St Giles—have been expected to keep clear accounts of the clothing and bedding clubs, which grew so large immediately that the opportunity of cheap purchase (especially of beds) was known. There was an error in listening, *for a moment*, to “MARIAN’S” inexperienced supposition that SHE could deal with it all, and that the visible entrance of THE LADY on the work would spoil it—“for of the Lady they would only beg.” We do not wonder that she thought so, from her knowledge of their habits; but since we have learned wisdom by further experiments, and collected the reports of many ladies, we find that if the Eible-woman is not allowed to collect the clothing money at their homes, they *will* bring it to the LADY at the Mission-room, and that this will offer opportunity of all blessing and

instruction to them besides. A very large clothing club requires to be managed by a lady who takes that department only—the purchase of material, the cutting out of garments, the receipt of pence, and the sale of clothes. The Bible-woman is quite sufficiently occupied in watching and helping upon this occasion, and the responsibility of such meeting ought as seldom as possible to be wholly thrown upon *her*.

While there is enough in the Clothing Club department thoroughly to employ the energies of one or more ladies steadily devoted to it, the superior aim of the Mission is effected by the "Mothers' Class," which seems to be the means most especially blessed of God to the saving of the souls of the people. While the Mission is small, this may follow the clothing work, and, perhaps, all may be accomplished in one evening or afternoon of the week; but when prosperity is shewn by increasing numbers, a separate hour must be given to the Mothers' Class, probably by a lady or ladies specially devoted to that alone.

Our delightful experience during the past year has been that the Mothers' Class has become neither more nor less than a BIBLE CLASS. The Scriptures have been preferred by the poor to any other book, and the exceeding novelty and power of the Divine histories over the minds of our London heathen has often made the teacher marvel, and look up for grace to teach. The teaching of the Great Teacher, God's Holy Spirit, has accompanied His Word.

We are glad to be able to present the testimony of

an earnest clergyman of the Church of England to the effect produced by the simple reading of the Scriptures on a Mothers' Class, gathered together by one of our agents in Bethnal Green. He writes to the lady who, in connexion with our Central Mission, has provided the Bible-woman's salary for one year :—

“ DEAR FRIEND,—You will be glad to hear that the ‘Bible-woman,’ (as she is called,) for whose services we are indebted to your kind remembrance of our work and wants, is doing very well indeed. She is selling an extraordinary number of Bibles. The people here seem, in truth, to prefer subscribing for Bibles to laying by for clothing, which is, I am informed, not commonly the case.

“ On Monday evening I was present, and assisted at the Mothers' Meeting over which my dear wife usually presides. I wish you could have seen their eager attention when I read to them. They leaned forward, with their mouths and eyes open, and literally drank in ‘the word.’

“ I read to them, from the New Testament, several chapters of our Lord's miracles, and of His discourses. When I came to the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter, their faces would have made a study for a painter. A big girl was sitting working just before me across the table, (she is in our Sunday school, and having seen Mrs T—— turn into the Mission-room, had followed her;) she dropped her work, and sat gazing like the rest. I am quite sure the story was new to most of them. Some, possibly, had heard it before,

though the Bible is, alas! often *so* read that they do not understand it.

"I felt quite convinced that evening that, if the New Testament, especially the Gospels, were read to the poor quietly and naturally, it would make its own way, as directed by the Spirit, to their hearts, and would awaken a far higher interest than other books. I believe the Lord was with us; for even my wife said, as we came home, 'Really, the Gospels seemed quite new to-night. I don't know how it is, I never seemed to enter into the spirit of those narratives, and never to have understood them, as I did this evening.'*

* We feel impelled to transcribe a passage bearing on this subject, from a recent book by a well-known writer. He is speaking of an audience in the Britannia Theatre, on a Sunday evening. "A very difficult thing," he says, "I thought it to speak appropriately to so large an audience, and to speak with tact; without it, better not to speak at all; infinitely better to read the New Testament well, and let *that* speak. In the New Testament there is the most beautiful and affecting history conceivable by man, and there are the terse models for all prayer and all preaching. As to the models, imitate them, Sunday preachers—else why are they there? consider! As to the history, tell it. Some people cannot read, some will not, many find it hard to pursue the verse-form in which this book is presented to them, and imagine that those breaks imply gaps, and want of continuity. Set forth the history for them in narrative, with no fear of exhausting it. You will never preach so well, you will never move them so profoundly, you will never send them away with half so much to think of. Shew them Christ's choice of twelve poor men to help in those merciful wonders among the poor and rejected. Preachers often address with intent to convince ideal paupers and infidels, but what are they to wretched me, peeping in out of the mud of the streets, and of my life, when you have the widow's son to tell me about, the ruler's daughter, the other figure at the door, when the brother of the two sisters was dead, and one

“Now, in church, I fear we fall into a conventional style of reading, and the same may be said even in our own houses. But the sight of these faces, and the sense of their want of knowledge, drove all mannerism away, and the reading became full of life and feeling. Their tears shewed what *they* felt.

“Oh, if every day these poor creatures could be got together to listen to the ‘Great Book’ till they all knew it, I am satisfied it would work wonders! But how can it be done? I have 14,000 in my parish, all very ignorant, wretchedly poor, and they live—you have no idea how they live. Even the Bible-women are appalled, and come to me quite ill with the sights they see.”

The earnest request of a pastor like this to be helped on his arduous way by more than one Bible-woman, could not meet with a refusal.

He has found NATIVE AGENTS, according to our favourite principle, in his own neighbourhood; good women, middle-aged, pious, and humble, who have been trained in the school of affliction. £50 salary for the second applicant we transferred from our General Fund; it had been contributed by a friend

of the two ran to the mourner, crying, ‘The Master is come and calleth for thee.’

“Let the preacher who will thoroughly forget himself, and remember no individuality but one, and no eloquence but one, stand up before four thousand men and women at the Britannia Theatre any Sunday night, recounting that narrative to them as fellow-creatures, and he shall see a sight.”—From “*The Uncommercial Traveller*,” by Charles Dickens.

to the Missions of the Book, *on occasion of the loss of £4000, as a thank-offering for that which remained.*

We are glad the foregoing impression should be made on the minds of any of our authorised teachers, by their occasionally doing us the kindness to take the Mothers' Class. Otherwise, we desire humbly, yet earnestly, to maintain that it is to unoccupied Christian LADIES that the Bible-women have opened so large a sphere of personal work. It is from the earnest pastor's Bible Class, composed of such educated ladies, that new teachers and helpers of the poor are needed.

There has been a "missing link" between all pastoral and even "pastoral aid" work, and these unsaved and untaught myriads,—the link of female agency safely RIVETED TO THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Full well for ages have the priests of Rome known and proved the power of this link; but they have riveted it to themselves, and so created a prejudice against it in all Protestant minds; and it is the Bible, and nothing short of the Bible, that will ever make women's weak agency safe and sure. It is simple evangelising work that is wanted of them—what St Paul means in the 6th of Hebrews, "laying the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God," and, as the margin reads, "teaching the word of the beginning of Christ"—the alphabet of Christianity—"first principles"—just bringing the people to Jesus.

An amiable young gentleman of a modern school, one who reminded us of him of old to whom our

Lord said, "Go and sell all that thou hast, and come, follow me," replied to this statement, "*Oh, but there is a great deal to be done before that!*" He had raised up in his mind the image of a poor, unlettered woman, called to meet the arguments of scoffing infidels ; and "what could she do but refer them to her clergyman ?" We knew, from experience of the fact, that they would be very likely to decline the reference ; but that if she went forth with the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," God might use the weak things of the earth to confound the mighty, and the victory be all His own.

The truth is, our teachers want a people "prepared of the Lord ;" and this preparation is only accomplished by an individual delivery to them of the Divine message. All reformations and revivals of religion have been connected with a return to GOD'S LAW ; all errors and falsities have been built up by supposing that the people cannot understand it.

"It is very pleasant to me to write about our Bible-women's Mission," continues our candid clerical friend of Bethnal Green. "They are working, I believe, conscientiously ; there is even enthusiasm in their work. It is the one thing they talk and think about. If it goes on well, you see it in their faces ; and you read there also their unhappiness and restlessness if there is anything wrong.

"How it is, I don't know, but they seem to me to be much more successful with their own sex than we are. Certainly their sympathy with the distress of

those they visit is *real* and natural, with nothing affected, nothing of condescension, nothing official about it, and this goes a great way. But our sympathy I thought real also. I take this, however, as a proof that there was something not quite right about us. Perhaps I ought to say *is*, for I am not sure that that something, whatever it is, is quite purged out of us yet.

"I consider it also a great advantage to the Bible-women that there is nothing distinctive or peculiar in their *dress*. They come to the poor as one of themselves, sit down by them in sickness, or any other trouble, as one of their neighbours ; they talk to them in their own language, and are, and *appear*, as one of their own class. There is, therefore, nothing to disturb their intercourse ; no prejudice to be overcome, no misunderstanding to be explained away ; nothing diverts their attention from the subject, and if the Bible-woman is earnest, and has tact, she is quite sure to create an interest in her favour.

"Still there is something to learn, and I want to know how these women have been successful, where we with, I hope, equal earnestness and zeal, have failed or seemed to fail. I could tell you of many instances of decided conversion, (so far as I can judge,) in which one of the Bible-women has been the chief, if not the only agent. One of these cases was remarkable. A poor woman was visited, by one of your women, at a time when she was in great trouble. Gradually confidence was established, and all the grief, with all its

secret complexities, was revealed. The reading of the Bible was suggested ; it was taken down from the shelf, dusted, and read ; then followed prayer, with many tears ; then more conversation, with greater confidence and frankness ; then help was sought of us by the Bible-woman, and sought with as much earnestness as if the distress were her own.

"The poor woman, in fact, had found an earnest and sincere friend, who never left her till her distress was effectually relieved—till, as she herself said, she was 'out of her trouble.' But a great lesson had been learned. Meanwhile, the Bible had secured, in this poor family, a new interest. They began to read it daily. I say *they*, because the husband soon took the same view of things as his wife, and went with her entirely in the new career on which she had entered. To say all in one sentence, this poor family became a Bible-reading, praying, worshipping, and really a godly family ; and they continued steadfast in the course so happily entered upon.

"Now, there is nothing very striking or peculiar about all this, but it has, for that very reason, more importance in my estimation. This, it seems to me, is the great work to be done by these women, and they are doing it. In houses where at first they met with rough treatment and abuse, they have succeeded in establishing themselves, even at the request of their former revilers, as welcome guests. Their coming is now looked forward to with pleasant anticipations. Rude blasphemers have been soothed down into quiet

listeners. They now not only listen to, but ask for the Bible. In one remarkable instance, the reading of the parable of the Prodigal Son was blessed to a man who, having driven the Bible-woman from his own door, yet listened to her reading in a neighbour's house afterwards. To him the Bible is all a new book, and of all books the most wonderful. He is always ready to hear it; he desires, seeks it. Fallen women, too, have been restored; and, in short, all that the best friends of the poor could wish is now, I believe, in the way to be accomplished."

Never have the MISSIONS OF THE BOOK been so marvellously brought before the world as in the past year. God has set an especial mark of success and of His support on all delivery of the message of His own Word. Wherever humble attempts have been made to circulate it, or to explain it, by the help of His Spirit, in Bible classes, whether among poor men in St Giles's, to young workwomen in Central Homes, or to thriftless, ragged mothers at our weekly meetings, further good has sprung up for the parties addressed, as if to draw attention to it.

And in no year of the earth's history have so many, in all countries, met together, in groups, to study the priceless pages of the Holy Scriptures, whether by the firesides of quiet homes, or in Mission-rooms of all descriptions, even from the palace to the cellar.

We cannot refrain from introducing here a sketch of Mrs Bayly's Bible-teaching. Her name is so well known that it needs no comment. With the assistance

of her Bible-woman, “MARGARET,” she had collected together, partly by the inducement of a tea, seven-and-twenty of the most wretched or degraded mothers she could find in the district, who never would think of coming to her large Mothers’ Class, which had grown, she says, “too respectable:”—

“What histories were written on many of these wan and sorrowful faces!—the traces of the ‘last beating’ were to be seen, the pinched look of semi-starvation, the reckless despair consequent on inveterate drinking, the fretful fretted spirit that had done its work in removing every trace of early beauty. Yes, all this, and much more; and as the tea and talk went on together, and as one little history came out after another, we found that, whether adapted for the office or not adapted, the company before us were mistresses of establishments varying from three or four to thirteen or fourteen in number.”

After tea, the women were seated round the room, and a chair was left for the lady at a little table, on which lay the Bible. “I opened and read, ‘Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.’ I stopped, and made a little sketch of that probable company.

“The dishonest man was there, the erring woman, the disobedient child, covetous, extortioner, drunkard, and perhaps, too, some ignorant, careless mothers, who had never once in their lives asked God to teach them what to do with the wonderful little body and soul He had committed to their keeping. The Pharisees need

not have murmured, but we cannot blame them for wondering that Jesus should receive such people and eat with them.

"To those who have never spoken to such an audience as this, it would be impossible to convey an idea of the force, the power, and perfect adaptation of the terms used in the parable that follows, of the prodigal son. Listen : 'Took his journey into a far country ;' 'wasted his substance with riotous living ;' 'spent all ;' 'began to be in want ;' 'sent into his fields to feed swine ;' 'no man gave unto him ;' 'perish with hunger.' No wonder that, as I went on, these poor creatures manifested, by their eager countenances and breathless stillness, that they had recognised *themselves*. And was it for such as they that the Father was watching ? and when they were yet a great way off, would He see them, and have compassion on them, and run to meet them, and receive them back, not as culprits, but to bestow upon them all the honours of conquerors ? Ah ! how many hard faces then softened ; how many stony hearts, that vice, and suffering, and harshness had frozen up for years, melted into tears as we went on with the loving words !

"At eight o'clock we left them with their good friend MARGARET. We knew how well she could follow up the impression, and we knew they would be more likely to speak unreservedly to her than to us. They told her they could scarcely believe such good news ; they had felt hopeless and helpless for years, and thought that no one either in heaven or earth cared for them ;

no one but themselves could imagine the weariness of the life they led, always sinning and suffering ; they would give anything in the world to alter their course, and find a better way of going on ; they begged their friend to pray with them again and again. MARGARET says that one of them would not leave her till a late hour ; she was afraid to go away. It seemed to her like losing sight of the rope that was to bring her up out of the horrible pit in which she had spent so many terrible years. The next evening four of them returned to Margaret's room, begging her to talk to them, and pray with them again. Margaret says that, as she is going her rounds, they will come out to her and ask her to come in and spend a few minutes in prayer with them.

"We had asked these poor women to meet us one afternoon in the week for about one hour and a half. Seventeen came the second time. Nothing can equal the intense earnestness with which they listen to the reading of the Scriptures. They seem at once to have realised that the leaves of this tree are for their healing. At the close, they requested that the next meeting might be extended to two hours."

Now we can bear testimony that, in the last two years, weekly meetings like these have multiplied "down among the dens," by a continual reproduction all over London ; they are every week increasing in

number, and yielding their fruits to the glory of God. The poor women, warmed, gradually clothed, and comforted, say these Mission-rooms are like heaven.

The lady or ladies who preside, and are responsible for the money taken, and who will forego any engagement of a pleasurable kind to keep punctual with their "mothers," declare that "no evenings in the week are like these to them."

Why is this, and what makes it so? The spirit of Revival from the Lord is amongst us, and He stirs up all concerned to prayer. He has used the straits of last summer and winter to soften the hearts of the poor.

Their desire for the histories of God's Word to be read to them, both from the Old and New Testaments, is continually increasing. The Bible-woman, in her rounds, is often asked to repeat a verse or two which may have been dwelling on their minds. "I believe God sent you to my house," says one. "What would I do without you now?" says another. "What has been done to my wife at your Mission-room?" adds a husband. "She is not like the same woman—she never swears at me now; and look at that table—I bought it with what I should have spent in drink but for her altered temper." This same man, having been present at Mr Whitwell's exhibition of Dissolving Views, illustrative of Scripture subjects, was so struck with astonishment that he could not sleep. His wife said he persuaded the landlady of their house to read the passages to which the views had referred. Another man was so impressed by what he saw and heard on

the occasion, that he went to a place of worship three times on the next Sunday, notwithstanding the scoffs of his companions. These are but few of numberless instances which the Bible-women have reported to us of the effect of picture-teaching on our ignorant poor. They are in many respects like children, and are equally impressed by the visible.

Another says:—“I met, in my district, with a young woman to whom I had given a ticket for Mr Whitwell’s Scripture pictures. She told me that when the picture of young Timothy was shewn, she thought she should have broken her heart, as it brought her own dear mother to her mind. Her parents were both alive, and did not know where she was; but, she said, ‘I did as the good man told us; I did go to Jesus with all my sins, and now I am going home to my earthly father and mother, and I have prayed that God will make them kind to me, and forgive me. I should have gone before, but I wanted to see you before I went away. May God bless you, for if you had not given me that ticket, I should not have found my precious Saviour.’

“I asked her to tell me her name, but she would not; she said, ‘It does not matter; I have been very wicked, and have brought such disgrace on my family, that I have changed my name; but if I live, I will write to you, and if not, I will be one of the first to welcome you when you come ‘home.’’ She said that her companion had gone into one of the penitents’ houses, and she would have gone too, but she trusted that her own parents would receive her back again.”

Our kind friend from Kendal again exhibited in London his beautiful Dissolving Views, in the month of November last, to the great delight of his chosen audiences, viz., the poor women attached to our Missions *and their husbands*. We arranged for their admission by tickets gratuitously, every night in a fresh quarter, bringing eight or ten districts to the same point. Their expressions of gratitude for this kindness, and of interest in the Holy Book illustrated, were evidently genuine. The story of the Crucifixion and of the Prodigal Son, as well as many others, were earnestly asked for, at the Bible-readings in the Mothers' Classes afterwards; and these impressions were thus conveyed at once to many thousands of the lowest poor in all parts of the metropolis.

Many have said they had no notion the Bible was so grand a book. The impression produced at these meetings is very solemnising, Mr Whitwell's own mode of comment being alike simple and touching. Prayer often followed the exhibition, offered by the people themselves. Every Postal District has shared in the benefit, and it will serve as a very practical connecting link to our Bible work all over the metropolis. It took nearly a month to make the circuit, and such are the numbers to be considered, that if the lecturer could speak to seven hundred a night, for ten years, five times in the week, he would not then have exhibited his beautiful pictures to all the poor of the million-peopled city.

From these Bible-readings and Bible-teachings there

has sprung up among the people a strong desire for prayer. They have learned to know one another at the Mission-room, and by twos and threes they lay each other's cares and griefs before God. They feel most at ease, perhaps, in doing this with the Bible-woman alone; a wife becomes very anxious for the soul of her husband, and they pray for him ; then they pray for their street, and for the most wicked people in it ; they do so day after day, and notwithstanding all the infirmities of the workers, and the weakness of the instruments, (and we are always ready to confess both,) God pours down the blessing. Some soul ready to perish is given to their prayers. Who would dare hinder them ?

This gathering of a few poor mothers in the Mission-room for prayer is a very important and fresh element in the work. It meets the utter ignorance of the real nature of prayer that prevails, and is so often expressed in the confession, "I try to pray, but can never find any words."

The following is an entry in a Bible woman's journal:—

"Five women came to the prayer-meeting, one of whom had not been before. As the others told me, one after another, what they wished me to pray for, she said, 'I never thought of praying for such things as you are going to pray for.' Then the others described how God had heard and answered the prayers that had been offered at our little meetings."

The progress of the Bible mission work awakens an ever-increasing consciousness of the multitude of human beings who crowd our streets and courts. Each month

adds to the number to be watched over and cared for, and still there are endless multitudes living on in their heathenism, for whose souls, practically, no one seems to care. The feeling is sometimes almost overwhelming, that while certainly something has been done, so much more remains unattempted.

Even at the end of her two years' work, it is recorded of Cromer Street district by "HARRIET":—

"Found a family without the Bible, but the woman said, 'I will begin to pay for a large-print one at once.' Her little back kitchen was clean, although there was not a chair to sit down on. Found two families without the Bible in the next house. One woman said the Bible was only fit for those who had nothing else to do, but she was too poor to pay any attention to religion. I asked her if she ever thought that God cared for her. She said, 'No, she was too poor.' I then read a few verses of God's Word to her. She said, 'That is not for us poor people;' but after a little more conversation, she asked for the loan of the book, that she might shew it to her husband."

In the same house, previous visits had borne some fruit.

The Bible-woman is told, "I am so glad you ever came into my room; my girl was ashamed that you found the place so dirty. She has promised me it shall never be so again, and I have to work all the week away from home."

At another place:—

"Found Mrs O——'s room in a very dirty state, and scarcely any clothes on either herself or her children.

She was working a beautiful lace dress in the midst of this dirt."

But nearly three months after, during which time Mrs O—— had regularly attended the mothers' meeting—"Found the room quite clean. She said she felt much better since she had cleared away the cobwebs and dirt. Before, she was never well, nor the children."

A Sunday-evening class for girls is much valued. All are at work during the week, many employed in waiting upon artificial-flower makers. Out of an average attendance of thirty, very few can read. They take great delight in singing hymns, the meaning of which is carefully explained, and frequently made the basis of the Scripture lesson. Though all are over twelve years of age, they require as much variety as a class of infants to keep their attention thoroughly engaged. One of the youngest of this class, a small interesting-looking child, one day brought the invitation, "Mother will be glad to see you, if you will call when father is out." The Bible-woman went. "How glad I am that you have come; my eldest girl is very ill, and would not let me rest till I sent for you." The poor girl said, "I am so glad I came to you to hear of the love of Jesus. Will you talk to my parents about their souls, as you did to us? My father does such wicked things, and he beats mother if she will not do the same."

I spoke solemnly to the woman about her state. She said, "My life is very miserable. My husband is so cruel, I cannot speak to him. He makes great profit out of his house, but it all seems to go faster than it

comes. My girl was very well till she came to you; since then she has been constantly fretting about the wickedness which is going on amongst us, and telling me she is sure God is very angry with us. But what am I to do?" I begged her to pray for God's Holy Spirit to teach her what to do, which she promised, and asked me to pray for her, and to come again soon.

At the second visit the Bible-woman is told she may go all over the house if she likes. She only finds one of the inmates at home. "Her room was the picture of wretchedness." The woman had two little children. I asked her if she had a Bible. She said, "What is that?" I shewed her one, and said, "This is God's book; it tells of His love to such as you and me." She said, "I never heard of it before; I am very wretched, tired of my life." This conversation also ended in a promise to subscribe for "God's book."

Four months after, a whispered invitation is received to come to-morrow morning to this abode of wretchedness. She finds its mistress "just going to take a young woman to one of the homes for the fallen. 'I have sent for you that you may pray for this girl and me, before I take her away from this house, and do ask that God may give me a different way of getting my living.' The elder girl is now in a situation, and the younger brought me the welcome news one Sunday evening, 'Father has done no work to-day, and he did not say to me, Shut up your Bible.'"

Sometimes the light shed by the Word alone into these dark homes is unexpectedly revealed. "A lad,

who had bought a Testament, came cut and asked me to come and see his father, as he was then sober. The man said, ‘What have you done to my boy? he is not like the same. He never gives me any cause to beat him now. I daresay you do not remember me, but I was among those who abused you a long time ago in A—— Place. I can never forget the words you read out of that Book.’ Then, shewing me a Bible, he added, ‘Everything is gone but this, and I will keep it as long as I live, for it was this Book that led me to Jesus, who, I know, has sent you now to save us from starving.’

YES, THE BOOK IS LISTENED TO, OFTEN WHERE HUMAN SYSTEMS OF WORSHIP ARE REJECTED. A man, whom his wife had represented as an infidel, said, on being asked to come to the Mission-room on Sunday evening, “I am so tired of hearing people talk about religion, I hate the very name of it; but if it is only the Bible that is your religion, I will come, and gladly too.”

“Visited the woman, who once told me she was glad I should not have to come there again, when her husband had paid for the Bible. I said, ‘Has his reading the Bible made your life miserable, as you thought it would?’ ‘No, my home is more happy now than ever it was; and my husband is so kind, I cannot refuse to go with him to chapel, and to let him read and pray, if he likes; though I cannot understand why he is so fond of that book, it is always in his hands when he is not at work.’”

Thus, then, although hopes are sometimes disappointed and many good impressions are resisted, some seed does fall on good ground and brings forth praise to Him who has said, " My Word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

At a similar meeting in Kentish Town, a dozen of the husbands were asked to a tea-supper, with their wives, who most regularly attended the Mission-room. After tea, one of the men rose up, and, in very simple language, said, " I am a working-man, and I can't make a speech ; but I think I ought to tell my brothers what I was, and what God has done for me.

" Eight months ago I did not know that there was a Jesus Christ. I tried all sorts of ways to get comfortable in my mind, but they all failed. At last light has broke in upon me, and I have joined a Bible-class, and I *know* there is a Jesus now, for He has forgiven my sins : and I wish all my friends here would try Him for themselves ; I am sure it will make them happier, and their wives, too, and their homes, too ! "

There will be yet lower links than the Bible-women in the chain of God's blessing ! There will be no missionaries to compare to those rescued men and women, who have known the misery from which they want to save others—who have been down in the gulph, and who have been brought up to sit at the feet of Jesus.

We may be startled at their strong figures of speech ; but when they are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, which shall have cast out from them “seven devils,” they will know their audience as we can never know them, and they will paint their own word-pictures, so that none shall dispute their power. Let us not judge of them by the scale of our educational refinement. It is out of these depths that souls must be brought to cry unto the Lord, and that He will save them ; and can we dare to dispute His righteous will in beginning with the lowest? “He came to seek and to save that which was lost ;” and it is impossible further to doubt that the presence of His Spirit is manifest in the midst of us.

It is two thousand and five hundred years ago since the prophet Ezekiel beheld the Divine Glory, in a bright mystery of cherubic heads, and wings, and wheels, *forsake* the threshold of the Lord’s house in the midst of idolatrous Jerusalem, (Ezek. viii.,) passing to mountain summits on the eastern side of the city ere it was lost to human gaze.

Once more, on Tabor’s crest, six hundred years later in the world’s history, the *visible* glory of the Godhead invested the mortal body which our Lord Jehovah had taken to Himself as a veil, enwrapt in which He might accomplish the work of man’s redemption. That body was etherealised by the effulgence of the Deity within, and to His amazed disciples “His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, while He was transfigured before them.”

These visible manifestations of Divinity must have thrown all fairy creations of man's imagination into deepest shade by contrast ; and yet even their magnificence is limited in comparison with that pervasive power of the Divine Spirit, *now* shed abroad in the earth, and which is daily perceptible to the children of God, who are working for Him, and listening for the sound of His chariot-wheels. Weak and weary and imperfect as all His servants are in themselves, still He chooses them and uses them as the instruments of His work in this world.

He has left them HIS WORD. He has, within the last half-century, given them the heart and the power to render that Word into almost all the languages of the scattered family of Adam. He has sent them forth to preach the "good news" to all nations ; and feeble and partial and bounded as their efforts to fulfil His command have been, long buried as the good seed they cast abroad has seemed, it was imperishable seed, and no grain that fell into the earth, with faith and prayer, from the hand of the sowers, who often watered it with tears, but is now beginning to bear fruit.

The Bible-women are permitted to be fellow-workers with all who have gone before—they have often gleaned the full ear, which has been the harvest of seed sown in a former day by other hands than theirs. By many a faithful Pastor, and loving District-visitor ; by Scripture-reader, City-missionary, and Sunday-school teacher ; by many a member of a Ladies' Bible Association, has the same seed been sown broad-cast in the last half-

century. Yea! are not the Bible-women the fruit of such labour?

Though now removed or summoned to their rest, all former workers await their reward from Him who forgets no true sacrifice, small or great, which His people have laid on His altar; He passes by nothing whatever which has been done in His strength or for His sake: “He is not unrighteous, to forget any work or labour of love which ye have shewed towards His name.” Such perfect knowledge “is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it.” If we could so far lift our eyes above what we are doing ourselves, how should we from the height of omniscience look down in grief and pity upon any, whether sowers or reapers in the field of souls, who ventured to step into the throne of the Master to dictate to Him by whom His message should be sent, or to say, in the least furrow of *God's field*, “All souls are mine,” the work is done. Let none else labour henceforth but me—for ever?

In this world of evil, evangelising work is never done; the utmost any of us can say is, that we have perhaps done *something*, added a grain of sand to the heap, probably an invisible grain. Go and look at any of the poor London streets. A simple-hearted country friend, who had read of the Bible-women’s efforts, came to us and asked, “How it was that she did not meet these women; when she came to London she expected to see them everywhere.” How she was to know them when she did see them in her walks we could not tell her, as they are in appearance very ordi-

nary sort of beings ; but she was little aware of the wildernesses of peopled space involved in the name of London. The one thing in which all earnest, genuine workers agree concerning its masses is, that there is no end to their work ; that, in fact, they do but touch its surface. No ; we are beginning to perceive that when the Lord of the harvest sends forth His labourers, His true labourers, in the day of His grace, their first act must be to welcome one another to His field, and to forget themselves in that welcome.

If “the unction from the Holy One” is fully shed abroad in our hearts, we shall endeavour not only to “dwell” but to act together “in unity.” (See Psalm cxxxiii.) All the members of Christ’s spiritual body will then partake of the fragrance of the anointing oil, which He, their HEAD, received “above measure”—“the oil of gladness above His fellows ;” and being with Him “anointed ones,” we shall be *one in work*,—His work, and not our own ; we shall be contented, yea, rejoiced, *to share* its details ; and whatever form that work may take, we shall earnestly seek to blend it with the everlasting WORD OF THE LORD.

These are days in which God is putting great honour on His own inspired Book. He is leading back the attention of mankind from schemes of their own devising to the mighty law which He dictated, and to the good news for the human race which has always been pouring forth from those fountains of wisdom, the Old and New Testaments. “To the law and to the testimony” are our eyes directed ; not to abstract and

doctrinal deductions from it. The Roman Catholic Church has long assured us that we could not understand it for ourselves, and facts are answering that sophism—facts out of the very depths of society. Every week now brings before us fresh facts, shewing that the acceptance and reception of that Book into any family is the beginning of a better and a happier life.

The steady, kindly, lowly visitor, wins the class of “the sunken sixth” to meet her on her own ground, as they have admitted her without question to theirs; and the clean room, the bright fire, the light, the cup of tea, attract them by twos and threes and sixes, to stay a while and listen to what THIS GREAT BOOK will say when they get it, or to what the small old copy on their dusty shelf does say if they listen to it. And they go back to their dark, dirty, drear abodes, with some thought about clean faces, and clean clothing, and clean beds, and air, and light, and water—with some feeling that they have each a soul, and are not quite like the brute beasts, and that that soul may be saved—“that there is a Jesus,” and that He died for them, “that they might live.”

They begin to get this knowledge best from a Bible-woman. We can now attest, from a large circle of experience, daily widening, that thus God honours His own Word.

CHAPTER IV.

Redeeming the Time.

“Mark that long dark line of shadows,
Stretching far into the past;
Every day it seems to lengthen—
Whither does it tend at last?
Each one added to the hosts,
From the present moment flies;
These are Time’s forgotten ghosts,
Fleeted opportunities.

“Characters of light or darkness,
Gabriel’s pen from each requires,
God records, if man forgets them,
Numbers each as each expires:
And the awful spectres all,
At the day of doom will rise,
Witnesses at Heaven’s call,
Fleeted opportunities.”



"OH to go back," says a new-born soul, "to that weary round of dress, meals, visits, and amusements—all without a purpose, save to pass away the long hours; to dwell among those who are ever seeking something further than the present, and, when that is found,

'Still seeking—all unrest,'

whose very atmosphere creates

‘A sense of emptiness, without the sense
Of an abiding fulness anywhere——’”

With no hearts do we feel greater sympathy than with such as these, which have found Christ, perhaps in some extraneous circle to their own, and, after a glimpse of the happiness of those who truly live for Him, must return into their present place, surrounded by relatives and friends, whether they be "*la crème de la crème*," or moving in any lower grade of fashionable life; to do as they do, live as they live, or encounter at once a pitiless storm of ridicule and persecution which few young Christians have courage to brave.

We believe there are a great many of those hidden ones—known to the Lord who has bought them—to whom He will manifest more grace in these times of revival. Meantime we would remind them that the

deepest streams have stillest sources, that there lies before them now a life of WORSHIP and of WORK, and that the *first*, which is the root of the *second*, can be begun in secret. They *will* begin to redeem the time for *soul* service—to the soul's best Friend; in this land of liberty they have His Book, hitherto a "dead letter," an unprized possession, now "a pearl of great price," or rather a treasury of pearls, an inexhaustible mine of the gems of truth. Of this mine the key of prayer will unlock the door, and bring the heavenly Teacher to their side, by night or day. With the Old and New Testaments in their hands they can never again feel they have "nothing to do."

That great Book has itself a story, which a thousand lives might be well spent in searching out, and upon which all history might be brought to tell. It is a tree bearing all manner of pleasant fruits, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Its words "lead in the way of righteousness—in the midst of the paths of judgment."

Little enough have those studied it who have even loved it for a lifetime. How few Christians, hitherto, have been "mighty in the Scriptures!" Are they few or many amongst his flock, comparatively speaking, that a devoted pastor can bring and say, "These, my spiritual children, know and love their Bibles—they are always studying them. Let the Lord take them and use them for the various ministries of life—they are prepared—they know how to wield 'the sword of the Spirit.'" Now, we can only be safe teachers as

far as we are learners here ; we can only give to drink of the water of life, as we ourselves go daily to the fountain.

But when the Lord has caused you to drink, He will make you lead others to the living stream. Your very countenance will tell that you have found peace in Him, and you will not be able to help, in some way or other, saying—"Ho, every one that is thirsty, come ye to the waters." Spiritual life *must* diffuse itself—it *will* find a channel—your Master will find it for you. Oh to have a Master always to work for who will never let us be out of work, abroad or at home ! He is one for whom it is worth while to "redeem the time." He will go with us. He will not send us upon a warfare at our own charges. He is "the chief among ten thousand—the altogether lovely." His yoke is easy, and His burden light, and He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"

Before we enter on the fields of work which lie open without limits before a devoted Christian mind, which has enjoyed the advantages of education and position, we will place you in relation to one of our earnest Bible-women, and tell you in her own words, from a journal that was never written for your eye, what has been her six months' work this year. It may shew you a little of what remains to be done among the poor of our great city.

A BIBLE-WOMAN AND HER STORY.

"Having been led through a path of much trouble for the last ten years, I had an increasing desire for those consolations which are given only to those who can look up to a sin-pardoning God. I sought and found them ; and so strong were they, and so sensibly did I then feel that my heavenly Father had chastened me in mercy, that I was led to cry from the depths of my heart, 'Thy will be done, Thy will be done.'

'Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
To me, Thy child, nought comes in vain !'

Then there sprang up in my heart an earnest prayer that God would use me for His glory. He gave me an invitation, connected with a promise, thirteen years since, in a day of bitter grief. I have called upon Him in the day of trouble : He has delivered me ; now will He help me to glorify His name.

"The dealings of God with me in those last ten years, have indeed prepared me to weep with those that weep. Oh, may I some day rejoice with those that do rejoice ! Ere I entered the Bible and Domestic Mission, I shed many tears through sleepless nights. On first visiting Snow's Fields, I knew not if I was called to enter this part of the vineyard, till one night, finding my strength much exhausted on retiring to rest, I thought I would ask a token of the Lord, that if He wished me to proceed, He would condescend to grant that I might go through the coming day without such prostration of strength as I then experienced.

How was I surprised at His compassion ! I rose in the morning, and I think I never felt so well in my life. I went through the day's work without even a feeling of fatigue. So great was the change in me that a friend noticed it. I told her what I had asked of God, and after my long walk home of three miles—still feeling quite unwearied—my mind was set at rest upon this question.

“April 16.—I have just left a small court containing some of the most wretched abodes ; but wretched as they were in the absence of almost every domestic comfort, they were rendered still more so by the firm resistance with which some of the inmates rejected the word of life ; yet I found an opportunity of telling to others ‘good news’ for those who were ready to perish, till tears chased each other down wan cheeks, and I heard the confession that the poor heart felt indeed an aching void. Spent a few moments in prayer, and was entreated to repeat my visits.

“Returning next day to this spot, I saw two boys, and heard one uttering the most bitter oaths against the other, who stood grinning with mischievous delight at the disappointment of the first, whose dinner he had stolen. I thought I had never seen a countenance so distorted by conflicting emotions ; I could read in it hunger, privation, revenge, and neglect, all mingled together. I watched them for a while in silence, and turned away to hide my tears. Might not the sin and misery of those poor children be traced to the ignorance and intemperance of their parents ? The sight of them

led me to cry, ‘O my Father, if Thou wilt make me the instrument of good to these souls in Snow’s Fields, Thou shalt have the glory for ever !’

“ Again, passing through these courts, a boy ran after me, saying, ‘ Mother wants you.’ It was a woman I had read and prayed with once before ; there were six children round her ; she and they nearly naked ; none of them had tasted food that day ; they never go to a place of worship. ‘ How can they, in the daylight,’ they say, ‘ for want of covering ?’ Every face told of starvation. Lord, hasten the time when scenes of suffering like this shall be unknown !

“ Found a man who had received a pious education. The last four years of his life, he said, he had been unable to support his children. I carried his mind back to his father’s fireside, and the group assembled round the family altar. He remembered it, and confessed that he had never prayed with his children ; and with eyes full of tears, and a heart too heavy to speak, he cast a look upwards, which seemed to say, ‘ Oh that it were with me as in the days that are past !’

“ ‘ Did he attend a place of worship ?’ I asked. No ; he pointed to his coat behind the door ; it was a poor one. ‘ He should not mind going to a room, if one were open near.’ Oh that the Church of Christ may see the necessity of bringing the gospel to the poor !

“ *May 10.*—Last night, held our first Mothers’ Meeting in our own Mission-room. (I had tried to have it in a National School-room, kindly offered me, but after

three evenings I found these sort of people would not come there. Three women and three girls were present. I felt at first embarrassed how to begin the business of the evening; but remembering that it was written, ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me,’ (Ps. l. 23,) sang a verse,

“My God, the spring of all my joy!”

and invited the friends present to unite, which they did. I then read the parable of the Prodigal Son, and concluded with prayer—in the offering of which I received such an assurance that I was doing what God would have me do, that I lost all the painful reserve that had troubled me at the first. I then produced the clothing with which I had been supplied, and explained what we hoped to do in the future.

“As I shook each by the hand, and bade them good-night, a girl about fourteen looked into my face entreatingly, and said, ‘I feel so happy, I don’t want to go away yet.’ I told her I was willing to remain longer with her if she wished it. She then told me, ‘My father and mother are both pious persons; but mother says us children don’t take after them.’ I said, ‘My dear girl, have you begun the life of prayer?’ She burst into tears, saying, ‘That is what I want, but when I try to pray, I don’t know how, I don’t know what to say.’ I answered her, ‘Now, just tell that to God; say what you have just said to *Him*; tell *Him* you want to pray, and cannot tell how—ask *Him* to help you for Jesus Christ’s sake—that *is* prayer. And believe what God says, when He declares your pious father is not

more willing to give you bread to eat than He is willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask it.’”

One of the women who came to this prayer-meeting proved the first-fruits of the Bible Mission in Snow’s Fields. When “Paulina,” the Bible-woman, first called upon her, she had no copy of the Scriptures in the house, but actually brought, as was afterwards found, her last three halfpence towards the purchase of a fourpenny Testament. Must we not believe that the eye of the Heavenly Watcher saw this poor hand reached out for *His* message, and honoured its acceptance by the speedy saving of that soul?

She seemed, Paulina says, “a poor thing, with little life in her, dirty, thriftless, wasting her day in gossip. She had no sense of ‘redeeming the time.’ I asked her to the Mission-room, and she heard enough on the first night to prevent her from leaving home for the hospital, for which a ticket had just been given her; ‘but no one will care for my soul there, like this,’ she thought; ‘I will stay at home, and see more of this Bible-woman.’”

A fortnight afterwards, she opened her mind to her new friend. She was full of distress at the remembrance of God’s long-suffering towards her, and also of all her past years of disobedience, while His mercy had been shewn to her even amid her bitterest sorrows. For a whole month, her soul was filled with anguish, and no words could she find to express the depth of her sense of sin in the sight of God. She was weak and ill in body likewise, and when Paulina shewed

sympathy for her suffering state, she said, "Ah, the load on my heart is the worst ; but I hope God has sent you to comfort me."

This state of deep conviction was met by fresh invitations from Him who came to seek and save the lost ; and in the reading of the Word of God and prayer, the heart was opened still more freely than before. And "on going the next morning," Paulina says, "I found her cleaning the room, which does not now look like the same. Nor did her countenance. That expression of deep anxiety was gone, and her face so lit up that she seemed twenty years younger.

"I remarked how nicely she had cleaned the room. 'Oh,' said she, 'I feel able to do anything now. I have a heart at ease, and I feel that God helps me in everything.' I asked after her sick child, and told her if any fresh trouble assailed her, I should like to be with her.

"At seven o'clock one morning, soon after this, I heard from her that the child, who had been ill three weeks, had departed. 'Thank God,' said she, '*that* one will not live to watch through the window so anxiously, and call out, as the other did before he died, 'Mother, have you brought the loaf ?'" This trouble of bereavement was added to by a brutal husband, who beat her while her child lay dead in the house. Still," says her friend, "her love and confidence in God increases. She speaks very clearly of obtaining the witness of her adoption into the family of God. When returning from the funeral, she said she was so happy

she could not shed a tear, for it seemed to her that she had herself but just begun to live. She has commenced family prayer at home ; and is constant at the Mission-room, every step towards which seems to her, she says, like one towards heaven.” She lately told Paulina that the reason she gave that last three-half-pence for her Testament at first, was to secure another visit from her, she was so afraid she should never see her again. “ What has come to you of late, Mrs W.,” said one of her neighbours, “ you seem to have grown young again ?”

“ Ah ! ” was the answer, “ I have lost the load of my sins ; and I feel happy, food or no food.”

“ And we never see you cleaning your house on a Sunday now, nor beating and scolding your husband and children, as you used.”

“ No,” said she ; “ and, by the blessing of God, I hope you never will again ; for, do you know, I feel I can never strike my children any more, for here have I been sinning against my blessed heavenly Father for forty-five years ; and if God had been to me as I have to them, where should I have been now ? No ; I mean to take my children, and pray with them night and morning, and that will do them more good.”

Soon after this a neighbour’s child was taken ill. Poor Mrs W—— was the first to offer her services. The father of the child, who was greatly distressed at its sufferings, burst into a flood of tears, and said—

“ Is it possible, neighbour W——, that you have come to offer your help—you, that the other day we

hooted down the court, as you went to the house of God, and said you were going to beg for a loaf. Oh, Mrs W——, if this is religion, it is just what Susan and I need."

"Yes," said she. "God sent me a messenger of mercy in the time of *my* trouble; and I am at your service night or day."

The poor man covered his face, and wept bitterly. She then took him by the hand, and drew him to his knees; and she thanked God that, having saved her from the wrath to come, she had a bright hope of meeting her little ones in heaven; and prayed that he, in his affliction, might find the same hope, too, through the same Saviour.

Being better off than she is, he offered to pay her for her service; but although her husband was out of work, she would not receive a farthing.

"No," she said to me, "I was not going to let my Saviour have a slur cast upon Him, that one of His children must be paid for doing His work that lay at her door. I felt I was doing it FOR HIM."

"Although this poor woman cannot read, the Lord has taught her to pray; and I am often admonished," says the Bible-woman, "at her simple faith and love. I am quite refreshed by her conversation; and she generally comes in half-an-hour before the time of our prayer-meeting, that we may pray alone together, as she says, that the poor souls may feel what God can do for them.

"I have need, sometimes, of such comfort in a

friend," said Paulina to us. "I have been so full of despondency now and then, that when I have come in from my work, I have been ready to throw down my books and cry; but yet there is much to encourage me. I have always gone straight with the message from God; and it is a wonder to me how already it has changed the ways of the people. Floors, never cleaned before, are cleaned now. One old woman scoured every rail in every chair, as well as an old deal bedstead, so that when I called to read next time the room looked altogether lighter, and I could read without the door standing open. Floors, stairs, cupboards, and door-ways now are all prepared to welcome me in many a formerly wretched abode.

"Mrs W—— has had the happiness of seeing her persecuting husband at our meeting. We had agreed, she and I, to pray that God would meet him there. We had also another woman who had grievously opposed a Christian husband, so as to hide his clothes on Sunday morning, to prevent his attending church. While two of our women were speaking of what God had done for them, and praising God for breaking their hard hearts, the tears flowed from her eyes, and *she* fell on her knees, and God spoke peace to her burdened heart before she left the room.

"The Mission Cottage is very damp; but I do not feel I should like to leave it, for God has blessed four souls in it, who continue to give evidence of the great change. Here many a weary heart has been soothed, and led to look to Jesus. One woman said one day, 'I do not

know how it is, but when I cry at home, it is always on account of what some one has done to me ; but when I cry here, it is always for what I have done and been to God.'

" ' There were twenty-nine mothers and two children here last night,' is a November entry. We fervently prayed for a blessing on those dear ladies who think so much of the poor as to send a Bible-woman to them. One and another of our poor mothers have poured out their hearts in thankfulness to God for the hope that has sprung up in their hearts ; but which of them has so much reason to praise God as that Bible-woman herself, who, after the bitter experience of ten years' trial, during which she was the wife of a drunkard, has at last had the unspeakable happiness of seeing her own husband in her Mission-room, beseeching pardon at the feet of Jesus ? And that pardon he found, and has since given full evidence of a true repentance by a return to his former self before he left the path of sobriety. My child, too, has been led to God during the time I have been in the mission ; and though not fifteen years of age, he appears to possess the clearest conviction of acceptance with God through Jesus Christ. My prayer is answered ; I rejoice with those who do rejoice.

" Our room is become too small, our seats too few, but I fear to launch out further single-handed. May God speedily find us a devoted Christian lady as superintendent."

A letter from Paulina drew the attention of the

visiting secretary of the Bible-women's Missions to this district, and to Mrs W——'s case. When there is no personal superintendent, (and we have more than a score of good women for whom we have not hitherto found LADIES,) they are obliged to refer continually to the Central Mission for payment for their provision of clothing, and for their distressed cases. We never think it right to dispense relief by the hand of a Bible-woman if we can help it. It is not that we do not trust her—but *it hinders her true usefulness*. In instances where the women, with strong and tender sympathies for the deep distress which they daily see, entreat vehemently for funds for their own dispensation, we have known them quite cured of the desire by entrusting them with about £2 to do as they pleased with ; and, long ere that is spent, they find it brings with it such jealousy and such deceit in their district, and that it is so much better for them only to be able to help the people to help themselves, and to carry the case of the sufferers to other sources of relief, that they have generally learned their lesson, and feel that to be made almoners will ruin their usefulness.

Such a case as the following, however, met of course with immediate attention :—

“MADAM,—I trust you will pardon my writing to you, as you know I have no lady superintendent. Poor Mrs W——, the woman spoken of in my journal, is now lying on a sick-bed. Since her conversion to God, she has supported herself by washing, and added greatly to the comfort of her husband and children.

When she fell ill, I applied at the Workhouse and got a doctor, and when he saw her, he said she had exerted herself beyond her strength—she was spitting blood, and she was never likely to get better in that wretched house.

“ She is become a member of a Christian church, and three of the poor members came to see her, but left without offering any assistance. I fear they have too many cases now of the same sort. The neighbourhood in which she lives is full of the most abandoned and drunken people; and this woman, who was the first they would send for in trouble, they have refused to wash a few things for, as they think she has fever; but I took care they should not see she was lost, and have been with her by night and, as far as other duties would allow, by day, and I thank God I feel about as strong as ever I did in my life. O Madam, it would rejoice your heart to hear her songs of praise, and to witness her unshaken confidence in God; but this follower of Jesus lies upon a heap of straw, covered with a small piece of calico, and two sacks. The husband has not been in constant work for a length of time, but has a little better prospect if he can stop at what he is doing now.—Yours faithfully, E. R.”

Another entry in the journal is:—“ Dear Mrs W—— being absent from our prayer-meeting, I asked a poor woman who missed her fervent prayers among the mothers, to go along with me to see her in her affliction, that she might observe what religion could do on a sick-bed. As we entered, I said, ‘ Well, dear friend,

and how do you fare now? Are you "very happy" still, down in that little dark corner?"

"It is not dark *to me*," she said, "for Jesus is with me here;" and then her looks, and all she uttered, made her poor neighbour believe it. What do you think, I asked her as we came away, "Is that happiness worth having? Is she not truly rejoicing in the Lord, amid all that is dark and dreary?" "Yes!" answered the neighbour, "I am amazed. I have been to church for years. I thought I had religion, and that I loved Jesus, but I have never loved Him like that. I must go in and see what I can do for her, poor dear—wash her children for her—clean her house. It will be reward enough to hear her talk to me—that *is* religion, sure enough."

We have selected and followed out this one case, among many others, in Paulina's journal. Her own history is as remarkable as her mission-work, and she appears to have thankfully worked with the City Missionary of the locality, and with all other Christians willing to help her; fully carrying out the idea of the Bible-woman's office, though, unfortunately, as she says, single-handed. There are few women of her class who alone could have done so much—and she had been truly prepared for her work by affliction. She and her husband both seem to have known the Lord in early life; and it was not till years after their marriage that he took to drinking—then, breaking the pledge from the persuasion to take threepenny worth of brandy, offered, alas! by a pious friend. From that time he

was seldom sober,—becoming a source of great trouble to his wife, and in his drunken fits being very cruel to her and her children. She, after very long and quiet endurance, resolved on seeking her own support, and remaining, for at least a part of the week, at a distance from him. God, it is evident, has heard her prayers, and counted her tears, and we trust will give her her husband's soul as a reward for her labours.

By means of timely succour and nourishment, Mrs W——'s health has been restored. As we heard of her continually going forth to nurse her neighbours, and being still much maltreated by her husband, we thought it might raise her in his esteem if we gave her partial occupation in Mission work. The experiment has therefore been tried, and very successfully, of making her a NURSE to the Snow's Fields Mission, and paying her five shillings a week, a bag being furnished for her with lint, linen, &c., accordingly.

She finds abundant occupation in the district, and opportunities of spiritual ministration incidentally. Here again the guiding hand of the Lady is eminently to be desired. The offshoots of a well-conducted Mission of this kind, and the fresh ways of occupying those whose life has hitherto been given to the service of the Evil One, may form a delightful subject of study for its Superintending Lady.

The one lesson which a devoted Bible-woman tries to teach to those whom she leads to the feet of Jesus, is "Redeeming the Time." Time is the common treasure of rich and poor. The rich may squander it in

amusing themselves and others. Many poor women waste it quite as profusely, gossiping at their doors. Immediately that either of these parties receives a sense of the duty of "life-work" for God, they have a vocation, and they begin to turn their spare minutes to account. The poor woman in Paulina's district took up the duty that lay at her door. The affluent can no longer rise in the morning with that wretched sense of "nothing to do," which ruins health and cripples energy. The poor have been trained for work directly they have turned to God—through their trials. Their superiors should be—by their deeper knowledge of the Book of all Wisdom. How few, we repeat, are mighty in the Scriptures! But shall it any longer be said so? To study that Book is life-work; but will not such study lead onwards to the necessity of distributing and teaching it to others?

We often think there is no book so interesting as the life-book which the Bible-woman reads in her daily rounds, and presents to us according to the measure of her mental power of recording the scenes she sees. The commencement of this year, 1861, has witnessed a continuance of good work in Paulina's district, for which, however, there is still no superintendent, therefore the mission here may be taken as a specimen of what *can* be accomplished by the Bible-woman without the aid of the LADY, whose help, however, would be so extremely welcome if the right individual were to appear. Poor Mrs W—— continues to be her friend and co-worker. Let us again examine in what kind of neighbourhood.

"You are a bad, wicked lot, the whole of you," is the remark of a Christian minister as he leaves a certain court; "there is but one among you that is anything like what she ought to be, and that is Mrs W——." Some of the most determined drunkards live in this locality, uniting to shield each other in their wickedness. When asked for rents or payments, they assist to shift goods from house to house by the back passages, till the storm of the landlord or the tallyman is over, and then back comes the property; and if work is stirring, the fire is piled high up the chimney, bottles and cans fly about in the hands of pale and shoeless children, friends are sent for, and loud laughing and singing is kept up till some more peaceable neighbour leaves his bed to see if his bad words and strong arm are able to quiet the revellers.

Amid such scenes poor Mrs W—— opened her room for a prayer-meeting; and let us observe who came to it? Mrs F——, so vile a swearer that a rough man has said, "That woman makes me tremble." While the Scripture-reader adds, "I, too, am quite afraid of her. It is certain her husband is; for his wife being twice as strong as the poor little man, has been used to thrash him and pull his hair out by handfuls, upon which he would kick up the table and break all upon it, and then run out of the house and down the court, like a child that knew what he would get when he came back again. Now the neighbours say—"What an altered woman Mrs F—— is since she goes to the prayer-meetings! She has left off swearing, and her husband tells her, 'Eliza, you are

not like the same ; surely something has done you good.' "

The little room in which they meet to pray is warm and bright. One of the former revellers has brought in a piece of wood, a famous block for the fire, which cheers the wintry night. Each one brings also her own seat. As they leave, the violent Mrs F—— says, "I never thought religion was such a cheerful thing. I shall quite long to come again. I have been looking forward to this meeting all the week." She has now purchased a fourpenny Testament for each of her three children, and is subscribing for a Bible for her mother in the country.

Here also was found Kate the water-cress girl, whose mother fights with her—the mother tearing her frock off her shoulders for gin, and the girl determined not to part with it. She sheds many tears during this hour of prayer. Mrs B——, too, who was so kind to Mrs W—— in her sickness, who often took her in a cup of hot cocoa for breakfast, and made her a decent window-curtain for her sick-room. "The acquaintance between these dear women," says Paulina, "commenced in my Mission-room at our mothers' meeting, and I never hear the voice of one raised in prayer but I see the response in the tears of the other ; and I fully believe Mrs W—— will be made the means of her friend's conversion."

And there are two more "boisterous" ones. Mary the water-cress girl, twenty-two years of age, cannot read, and her character is well known to all Kent

Street. She, too, attends the Mission-room and prayer meeting. The backslider also is there, who says he once felt the love of God, but now "stands in the broad road to hell." His wife brought him with her. Mrs W—— is trying to teach her to make their own miserable home more comfortable, for she has "never been able to do anything but to cotton chairs."

Yet it is not only the meetings, it is the visitation of these people in their misery, that is the duty yet undone in this capital of Christendom. Gaze, you who desire work for the Lord, at a few sketches from the life-book of the courts and alleys of London. "This day," says Paulina, "first saw poor Widower P——. He was lying ill upon an old bedstead, on what could scarcely be called a bed, and with neither sheet nor blanket; these had been pawned or sold one after another to procure a meal. I had been told of the case at a shop close by, as being one of sad distress. The shopkeeper said the man was sober, but had been out of work for months. 'You had better not go up,' added she, 'for they are almost naked, and, besides, it is not safe.' Safe or not safe, up I went, and found the poor children, three in number, covered with blotches from dirt and disease. 'Oh,' said the man, 'we had just given ourselves up for lost.' The mother had been dead more than two years, the eldest girl was seven years old, their old black frocks hung on them in tatters, and these they had outgrown. They had no underclothing. I believe these children had scarcely seen a human face for months except each other's, and

when I went in they began to cry." Now comes the remedy. God has surely sent Paulina and her helper to turn the tide of misery like this. They are the right sort of people to do it. "I spoke kindly and cheerfully to the poor creatures, and fetched a comfortable jug of soup from the Mission-room, which brought scalding tears from the man's bursting heart. Mrs W——'s aid was soon called in, and she taught the eldest child to wash herself and the others, and went in once or twice a-day to them till they got better, taking some clean old linen afforded by the Mission. Soon tears were changed to smiles and the deepest thankfulness. A week or two afterwards, the eldest girl was found in the Mission-room, with clean face and tidy hair, helping to serve the welcome soup from the pretty little copper to others as well as herself. She is also admitted to the work meetings, and I trust our acquaintance with this family will prove for the glory of God."

Another record from the journal is of ministry to the disconsolate widow :—

"Poor Mrs G—— was at the mothers' meeting to-night. Her husband dropped down dead in coming from his club. When I called on her first, she said I made her ten times worse than before, and took to her bed. It required all the persuasion that could be used to get her up again, and then she said she should kill all her children." I called many times, and being at last permitted to pray with her, I got a promise from her that she would go upon her knees alone with God, (which, I believe, she kept,) and soon afterwards she

came to my meeting. There, I believe, I saw her shed her first tear, for till then her heart had been full of rebellion ; but now the fiery eye was softened, and there was a look of passive sorrow, as, when we parted, she said, "This evening has been such a comfort to me!" On a subsequent evening, she was present, with her fatherless child on her lap, of seven months old. She earned $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. by her work, to which she added 4d., and took home a useful apron.

An influence is further gained over social habits :—

"Mrs C——, the other day, invited me to tea," continues Paulina, "it being her daughter's birthday, 'the first,' said she, 'I ever kept; but, bless God! I'm a new mother now, so I will keep it.' There were about fourteen of us. This woman, I believe, was first enabled to cast her sins on Christ, while singing the lines at the Mission-room—

'I will believe—I do believe,
That Jesus died for me.'

And her confidence grows stronger daily. We had a happy tea-meeting. After tea, oranges and nuts were placed on the table, and with them some one put a pack of cards. I had provided myself with one of Weaver's hymn-books, and at once I started off, singing, 'We're bound for the land of the pure and the holy.' One after another came over to sing with me, and hymn followed hymn till the dirty old cards on the table were forgotten ; and while they were choosing more hymns from the good little book, some one stealthily removed the cards, and they did not make their appearance

again. Neither young people nor old inquired after them. We spent a cheerful time in conversation, which I was asked to close with prayer ; and each one shook my hand, as I think they would not have done that of a card-playing Bible-woman. This ‘new mother’ has since opened *her* room for a prayer-meeting, conducted by the city missionary.”

A deep sympathy is evinced with the people’s woes :—

“ That poor Widower P——, how my heart aches for him ! His family are quite cured of their dreadful disease, and he has a little work, but so ill paid he cannot clear himself. ‘ I must have a shop score for food,’ said he, ‘ which is at the highest price, and of the worst quality ; and when their bill is paid I have only 1s. 6d. to begin the week with.’ He works at night, while others sleep, to secure even this. Now, it is in similar cases to these that I feel *alone* in my work. If I had a superintending lady, she would devise some plan to help this man over one week, and then the difficulty would cease. The youngest child, a boy of two years, came and threw his arms about my neck and kissed my cheek, and the father burst into tears. Well, I thought, if I cannot remove their temporal difficulties, I can let the little motherless one feel that it is loved ; and we knelt together in prayer to Him who always hears. This man came to the Mission-room, and would go to no other place, on account of his appearance.

“ We have about six in the room now who can vocally address the Lord, and these are all persons who first began to pray in that place. Our meetings are very delightful. This winter we have had much sing-

ing, because the people's hearts have been more than usually depressed, and I know the Bible-woman has often forgotten her own sorrows and the people theirs while thus engaged. I have watched the effect of this singing on their faces. No poverty then! No; the children of God are all rich. I sometimes wish I could collect the sum of human woe and fly up with it in my arms, and cast it before the throne of our Advocate with the Father, where I know it would dissolve in the sunlight of heaven." Ah, dear fellow-worker with Christ, *in His own time*, not ours, that will be done; and, meanwhile, in many a soul weighed down with its burden of earthly care, He is forming His own image, and He is seeing now of the travail of His own soul, and is satisfied. He gives *you* to rejoice over each lost sheep that you bring back to the fold, ay, to rejoice with the angels in heaven, saying, "This one was lost, and is found." With regard to your good helper, Mrs W—, well may you say, "Truly this *is* a new creature, both inwardly and outwardly. It *is* a contrast—this cheerful and respectable woman, with a neat quilled cap, sitting by me learning to read God's precious book, the influence of which, at forty-six years of age, has changed her from the meagre, downcast, dirty, passionate, noisy wife she once was."

"Her husband has been frequently known to say, that she is so altered personally that he can scarcely think she belongs to him. At our first interview, I found her with smutty face and long tangled hair, without a thought of heaven, and not so much as a leaf of a Bible in the house. She then almost immediately

became anxious about her soul, so anxious that she scarcely touched any food for three weeks, although in that interval she was transmuted from an old and spiritless to a sprightly, middle-aged active woman. Yes, and yet she is not left without the cross. Her husband is still a drunkard, and in a fit of anger very recently beat her so severely, and gave her such a black eye, that she was obliged for days to keep her bed. On mentioning this to our ladies as a reason for her absence from the season of payment, they told Paulina, that, as this happened so often, and Mrs W—— was now connected with the Mission, they thought he had better be sworn to keep the peace towards her, and that Paulina, as her friend, should go with her before a magistrate."

"Arrived at home, they knelt down to pray over this resolve, and such faith in her husband's ultimate conversion was bestowed upon the oppressed wife, that she said "she could not kneel down to pray for him, and then appear against him; she must leave her cause with God." And he is since reported to have behaved much better to her.

Here, then, is an instance of the acceptance of the message from God, by a poor outcast, leading to "redeeming the time;" and to what should the same cause lead those who have not her difficulties to overcome ere they can work for God? Let them ponder such sketches from nature, and let the words ring in their ears again, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

CHAPTER VI.

The People's Wants, and their Welcome.

“Who homeless near a thousand homes have stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.”

“Oh, man is dear to man ! The poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life,
When they can know and feel that they have been
Themselves the fathers, and the dealers out
Of some small blessings—have been kind to such
As shew'd them kindness; for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.”

*

LET us listen to the devoted wife of a clergyman in the Strand, who has taken one of our agents to her help among her husband's crowded poor. This lady came recently from a well-ordered country parish into the great world of London work.

"I cannot describe," she writes, "the amount of wickedness of all kinds in S—— Yard. It is wonderful, though, how they cling to the Bible-woman, and to her Mission-room opened there. The people whom she has once brought within the walls never seem to like to be long away; they appear again and again, not yet always quite sober, but always civil, and never irreverent. This institution is truly named the 'Link' between them and better things; and they seem as if they did not wholly give up all hope of themselves while they keep in communication with 'JOANNA.' They cannot always come 'to buy'; and, between gin and poverty, their purchases at present are not great; but, as we are beginning to pay them for their work at our meetings, they will put, at least, a part of that payment away on their clothing-cards; and so the article they have made is bought by themselves. They are not so likely to pawn it, when they have made and paid for it."

"I cannot speak in too high terms of our valuable friend. Hers is no light or pleasant task; but her zeal and love make it really a delightful one to her. She is a very hopeful, earnest-hearted woman, endued with strong faith, and glowing love to souls; but, unless her Master went forth with her, she would sink under the scenes she witnesses, and faint at the discouragements that she encounters.

"Oh, the stories that have been poured into her ear during her six months' work! Some of the poor creatures say, 'We can tell you what we could never have told a man-missionary, and what we could never have told a lady.' There was one victim of the Thames the less for her walk down C—— Street the other day. She met a face she hardly recognised, it looked so wild and wan, till she remembered its expression when paying a few pence for a Bible, and recalled the room in which she had seen that person, with a man whom she supposed to be her husband.

"But 'he whom she had was not her husband.' Only a few months before she was a respectable housemaid, in a country town, to a family of good standing. 'Keeping company' with a man, who had taken work in the place, ended in her leaving her situation to get married, as she believed; and, by her lover's desire, she accompanied him to London, that the wedding might take place from his uncle's house.

"The time was fixed, and the clothes ready; but his excuses put off the ceremony day after day. She was in his power; and the uncle and aunt proved no pro-

tectors to *her*. The mask the man had worn was thrown off; he took to coming home drunk, then to beating her; at last he was carried off to prison for an assault committed in a deadly drunken fray. The uncle and aunt said they could keep her no longer. She must go; she had no friends, or she would have left that wretched house long before. She dared not write home. She was without a roof, without a crust, without a hope, and, in a paroxysm of wild despair, she was rushing to—eternity!

“If ‘the Missing Link’ had only been found to draw this *one* soul from perdition, and to lift her within the reach of mercy, oh! it would be well worthy of anthems of praise for ever and ever.”

“‘Joanna,’ who treated her with a simple, neighbourly friendship, that was just the thing to soothe her forlorn, excited feelings, said—‘How do you do? what *is* the matter?’ The outburst of her wrongs followed, with the fearful announcement—‘And now I’m going to put an end to it all—I’m going to drown myself.’ There could be no doubt of it either; it was a face of despair and wild determination.

“With quiet kindness the Bible-woman said—‘Oh, I’m so sorry to hear of this! we’ll talk it over;’ and she drew her to a retired place, where they could sit down on a step. The poor girl had now an ear into which to pour her tale of shame, regret, and indignation, and it calmed her to feel she was engaging one kind heart’s sympathy, and to be told that through *all*, God had watched over her, and was waiting to be gracious

to her. 'Then came the tangible proofs of His mercy and pity. 'Joanna' first gave her a little money from her own purse, and then taking her to the house of one of the women who has attended the Mothers' Meeting from the first, said she should call again in an hour, and came on to me.

"I grieve that illness has kept me from personally seeing as much of this poor young creature as I should have wished; but she has been well cared for by 'Joanna,' and by my kind helper, Mrs S—, who gave her needlework at her own house, that her sad thoughts might not prey on her or fresh temptation assault her. I have seen her since her child was born, and am much pleased with her. Her manners and voice are gentle, and she seems to have a deep sense of her sin before God. She says she never prayed from the time she left her place. She fears sometimes that God cannot forgive her, for she had been well brought up; but then she remembers how wonderfully He rescued her. A situation has since been provided for her. She expresses great anxiety that her child should be placed with people who will teach it to fear God. We are about to write to her mother, and tell her how her child was lost and is found."

There is another case to which, in this same district, the Bible-woman has been made the means of bringing help and hope.

There was a lodging-house in Hemlock Court which she had often passed, and thought too formidable to

enter; none but men ever could be seen there, and often very rough-looking ones. But one day she thought, "Well, I ought to shake off this feeling. I have a work to do in that house as well as the rest." So she looked in, and asked if any one would like to subscribe for a Bible or a Testament. She was courteously received, but the company appeared too abject to enter on any subscription, and she was about to cut her first visit rather short, when she saw a pale, sorrowful-looking man sitting apart from the rest, and a second glance shewed her that he was *blind*. She therefore addressed him, asking how he became so, what his occupation had been, and what were his means of subsistence now.

He had been a lawyer's clerk, and with his eyesight he lost *all* his livelihood. His friends had no more than sufficient for their own needs. He said that he had received money at different times from persons well known in the ranks of benevolence, of whom he spoke in terms of affecting gratitude; but he could not bring himself to apply again and again to those who had aided him in the earlier days of his misfortune. He also grew more and more reluctant to put himself in the way of those kind-hearted fellow-clerks who had often pushed into the hand that was never held out for it, a shilling or half-a-crown that he knew could be ill spared.

He learnt at one time how to make some simple mats, for drawing-room tables, out of wool and twine;

but it was a passing fashion, and he only wasted material in making them, and so he had sunk lower and lower in the chilling depths of poverty.

At the time that "Joanna" found him, his resources had dwindled down to two shillings a-week of outdoor relief from the poorhouse. These two shillings were punctually paid for *rent* every Saturday night; for he said, "If a man has not got a roof over his head, he may as well be in his grave."

"It is a case of bitter poverty," adds the Lady Superintendent of this district, to whom "Joanna" brought him, "and very sad, as he is a man of some cultivation, and too sensitive to push his way through a world that passes him by." The Bible-woman's voice startled him from a reverie—"reverie" is his own expression—yet there was much in the character of his thoughts, as he related them afterwards, akin to supplication.

He had been weighing the extent of his woe. He felt that want was preying upon him, and that nothing but want was before him. He had some trust in God—in His power and in His love—and had always felt that, "if He did not help him as much as he *wished*, still He never forgot him," and now the thoughts of his heart were turned to Him, saying, "*I* know not where to look—the Lord alone has power to raise me up friends." "Joanna's" kind voice soon convinced him that the Lord could and *had* raised him up a friend. She told him of the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and she assured him, too, that she knew where there were earthly helpers who would

try to lift him out of his misery. She left him greatly cheered, and filled with surprise and gratitude.

This poor man was soon better clothed, and lodged, and fed, by aid of the Mission. Society owed him care in his helplessness, for he lost his sight owing to cold and inflammation, incurred in saving the life of a drowning child. A reward from the Royal Humane Society attests this fact. From the year 1853 he had been the inmate of hospitals, and in 1857 was discharged from St George's totally blind. Having no friends to support him, and no means of subsistence, he remained for two years in the workhouse—a period, as he felt it to be, of “incarceration”—so that he preferred to come out at any risk, even though his release was only an alternation to sickness and starvation, to a lodging-house in Hemlock Court, damp sheets, and new suffering; how he lived, as the poor often say, “God only knows.”

Then came his meeting with the Bible-woman. He was at the time in very ill health; yet we hoped that, when restored by a daily increase of nourishment, he might have earned a comfortable livelihood by teaching the blind to read in their own homes. But it was ordered otherwise.

“Early in the month of March,” says the kind superintendent of the district, “he breathed his last. We have had much encouragement concerning him lately, and have every reason to hope that he truly believed in Jesus, and died in peace. I had lately a delightful interview with him. He told me that he had constantly

cast himself at the foot of the cross in supplicating prayer, that he had confessed his own unworthiness, and that he now felt happy, in the humble hope of going to a joyous and eternal home—to Jesus, who died to save him.

“ His health had been failing for many weeks, and the abundant sympathy shewn by the readers of the Book and its Mission enabled him to have many comforts and alleviations, as his strength gradually declined. I believe that while we thought him cold, he was pondering, and that when he gave himself unreservedly to the Lord, it was a ‘reasonable service;’ and this was doubly satisfactory for so peculiar a mind as his—long habituated to brood over its sorrows. I believe his prayers were truly heartfelt, and his trust steadfast; his patient submission and resignation shewed it. From the fund placed in our hands for him the last offices were performed, as he would have desired, for the perishing body, which ‘Joanna’ followed to the grave, rejoicing that she and other friends had been privileged to lead his soul, in his last days, to Jesus, ‘the Friend of sinners.’”

And, now, here is a further “leaf from life” in the Strand—a report of the work of a second Bible-woman, from the pen of another lady:—

“ You have often asked me,” she says, “for tidings of my district, and I have as often thought that I had nothing to relate. Now, after six months’ working, I

cannot tell you how cheered and encouraged I feel; how I *enjoy* my share of the ‘ministering,’ and how I want to ‘go on’ more earnestly than ever.

“ You know ‘Patience’s’ district is mostly composed of courts and alleys. N—— Court is a very low and dirty place, but much improved since the Mothers’ Meetings have been attended by several of its inmates. It is delightful to see how our Bible-woman is loved and respected, and how she has won her way into the confidence of the poor creatures who crowd those back streets.

“ One poor old man lives alone at the top of a house; his soul seemed a perfect blank until ‘Patience’ went and read to him. The other day he told her ‘he now knew what faith meant.’ When she knocks at the door, he asks, ‘Is that my friend?’ She visited a woman who had been bedridden for months, but was not destitute, as she had some small pension. This poor creature pretended to be deaf, and for a long time refused to receive either ‘Patience’ or ‘Joanna.’ How true it is that the way to win their hearts is by love—the ‘charity that suffereth long and is kind !’ This poor, hardened creature was sensibly touched by ‘Patience’s’ words of loving pity for her bodily sufferings. ‘You may read if you like,’ was the result; and the *deaf* then listened very attentively during several consecutive visits. She is dead now, but we hope some ray of God’s light entered her dark soul before the last great change came.

“ Another poor woman had given up drinking for

four months, and we had great hopes of her ; alas ! last week she has again fallen into temptation. We are so grieved ! Her husband said to 'Patience,' 'I know, if you had been here, my wife would have kept sober.'

" How can I tell you how God has helped us ! The man who at first said, ' I don't want Bibles, I want bread,' has subscribed for 'the Book,' and now reads it every night.

" There is a sensible improvement in the whole district since our Mission began. The Bible-woman *is* the Missing Link, there is no doubt. It is astonishing how much more the poor *trust* her and *confide* in her than they do in the generality of lady visitors.

" Now let me tell you a few words about our Meetings. I only hope my Mothers enjoy them as much as I do ! The attendance is good. I think quite as many come as I can attend to ; we have from twenty to thirty regularly present. One had been absent for some time ; when she came, last week, we welcomed her cordially. She is very poor, with many children, and, being tired, sat quite still, with her baby on her knee. As she was leaving the room, she observed to 'Patience,' 'This really has done me good ; I *will* try and come every week.' Several women never miss under any circumstances. The great comfort and help derived from the loans and work given out and paid for, is refreshing to see.

" There is a grandmother amongst us, a capital needlewoman, and quite an authority. She was a lone,

sad, friendless old woman, until ‘Patience’ found her out, and brought the warm light of the Bible to her room. Mrs H—— has a husband, who is out all day with apples or oranges. Though not a bad man, he was still quite indifferent to religion until he went to Mr Whitwell’s lecture, and saw the beautiful dissolving views. The picture of our Saviour on the cross has made a great impression on him, and since that evening he has allowed his wife to read and pray with him every night. May God bless the good gentleman who has carried out such a capital plan for teaching the most ignorant and obtuse!

“ You will be glad to hear that I have several wild-looking girls as regular attendants at the meetings. They are improving very much ; I see with pleasure, smooth heads and clean faces, where before was a heap of dirt and rags. One of these girls brings me, occasionally, two or three apples, which she suddenly lays on my lap, and then she runs away. No fruit could be sweeter to me than that is

“ Two or three of the women have been able to pay for blankets, entirely by money earned with us.

“ The suggestions of that kind clergyman, last Monday, on Bible-readings to our Mothers’ classes, were very welcome to me. I have tried, and mean to try, to teach in the way he recommended. My mothers are so attentive, and seem to enjoy the reading and prayer. We always sing a hymn ; and they are learning some new tunes. My friends, the Misses H——, help to fix the work and cut out garments.

"I dare say you have heard how much more the poor go to church now than they once did. Mr K——, our rector, rejoices in the change. I am so glad I can do a little in this great and good work. I was afraid to attempt it at first, but God has indeed helped me.

E. M. I."

The wants of the people, and their welcome, always make us think of HETTY in Gravel Lane. We will take the first leaf of her journal :—

"Nov. 28, 1859.—My first day of Bible-work. In four days I obtained four subscribers for Bibles, and twelve promises for clothing. There are many Romanists in my district. The first day, one put me out of the house ; the next day, two conversed with me on doing penance. I pointed them to the all-sufficient sacrifice, Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, 'who taketh away the sins of the world.' They said they were taught to believe as they believed ; they could not change their profession now. Some, however, received me kindly, and said they should subscribe for clothing. I found only here and there one that seemed to know anything of religion by experience. In Swan's Court I found a young woman very ill with spinal complaint ; has been confined to her bed two years. As I spoke of the love of God, she wept. I asked her if she had the witness of the Spirit with her spirit that she was the child of God. 'No,' she said, 'that is what I want.' I endeavoured to point her to Jesus, and prayed with her. She was very thankful. A man was ill with a bad throat ; he is accustomed to go to church,

and he appeared to know the way to heaven, but he is not walking in it. I read and prayed with him, and laid his case before a benevolent society.

"My next conversation was with a Jewess, at first on the Old Testament, and then, in my poor way, I explained the plan of salvation by Christ. She complained of the loss of time, and the hard tasks that her religion imposed, and that it does not make her happy. Her husband is a strict Jew, and she has been taught to believe that Christ is not yet come; but she listened to me as I told her He was, and that if she took His yoke upon her, she would find it 'easy,' and His burden 'light.' May the Holy Spirit open her blind eyes!

"I meet with many cases of distress; people suffering from wounds and weakness, and very few of them knowing the Saviour, who can make labour rest, and pain sweet, if suffered for His sake. In one house, a husband, afflicted twelve years, had not been able to work much; one child out of six, almost naked, had had St Vitus's dance; the mother has a wound in her leg. I read and prayed with them, and asked the mother to come to my meeting. I hope the Lord will help the poor.

"This woman came to the work-meeting for mothers in the afternoon, and seemed most thankful for a warm article of clothing which I found for her to make, and which I said I would pay her for making, and thus enable her to buy it. Three or four women were with us, one a mother of a family in great want. I gave her a piece of print to make a pinafore. She appeared

much pleased. One or two others brought their own work. I read a chapter from the Bible while they worked. We sang and prayed, and they said it was one of the best afternoons they ever spent."

So the Mission begins. In this case there was not at first any Lady Superintendent to take up these threads of sympathy ; but entrance is gained. " Hetty" comes for a while to head-quarters for her salary, and for what little aid can be entrusted to her, though we have scarcely time to read or attend to her most interesting journal ; for, thank God, she is one of a now ever-multiplying race, who shall go forth through all the courts and alleys of our cities, as angels of mercy and help. It is high time, for the angel of death reaps his harvests quickly here, whether with his sickle of want and nakedness, or occasionally as follows :—

"I called in H—— Street, where I had visited a woman and her daughter, whose sick husband was in the country for his health, but he had come up to spend Christmas with his wife, who was as well as usual. She ate a hearty dinner and tea. She was jesting and laughing, and keeping a 'merry' Christmas, as they termed it. About ten o'clock at night she fell down, and died ten minutes afterwards."

Day after day, on plods the Bible-woman, amid dirt and misery, among shoeless, naked children, and weary mothers, who, however, seldom refuse to be won to the work-meeting, where they learn that if Jesus makes our hearts clean, our homes will soon be clean too ; and while, with tearful eyes, they tell that they

have had so much trouble, that they are "got careless about everything but bread for their children," they add that they will try to mend; they will pay for Bibles when they are not quite so poor; they hope God will bless this Bible-woman, they are sure He will; they will try to get boots to send a child to school, and so on. Oh, the word of hope and the hand of help! It is come at last, poor creatures. We did not know how to get at you before, but now we will never let you go.

"I do think," says "Hetty," "the Lord will make me a blessing here to many of these sorrowful mothers, to rouse them to clean their homes and their children; but, above all, I hope to be the humble instrument in God's hand of leading them to Jesus. I visited a woman, a mother of a large family, to-day. As I knocked, one of the children opened the door, and as soon as the mother saw me, she flew to me and clasped me in her arms. 'God bless you,' said she, 'I am so happy!' 'What makes you so?' said I. 'I am happy,' said she, '*through you*. I had been so miserable ever since you first called on me. You led me to feel I had been so great a sinner, and every time I came to your meeting I felt worse, till last night, and oh! then I could have stayed all night while you was telling us about "the living water," and you so begged us to drink of the Water of Life, and to go and call our husbands and our children and invite them to drink too. I felt, somehow, to lose my troubles all at once. It was like the loosing of a heavy burden, and when I came home my family seemed changed. Though my boy is a bad boy,

he stayed in-doors, and my husband was kinder, and we sang together. I could not sleep, I was so happy. I rose before it was light to praise God. My boy says he is sure you are a good woman to me, and he will paint you some pictures, and stay at home of an evening, and that he will go to church, where you go, on Sunday, when he has some clothes, and so will I. I am tidier than I was, now you have got me that gown and cape—I have all but a bonnet : but I think I would go if I had no bonnet. Since I heard that chapter, I am so happy.'

"The portion which had so much impressed her was the fourth of St John ; I had tried to speak to them from it as for eternity, knowing I shall have to give an account for what I speak.

"Called, at a place I had missed in my first canvassing, on Mrs H——. Her son was very ill,—he seemed to want proper nourishment, his mother did not know how to make it. I made him some sago, and fed him myself. They are Romanists.

"Held our little prayer-meeting on Tuesday night ; we had more people than I could find seats for. The Lord Jesus was with us, and we realised His presence. An anxious seriousness was depicted on their countenances."

At the next meeting the Bible-woman seems to have had a sad cold, and could scarcely speak to the people. Some of them wept because she looked ill. They said what should they do without her now ; and one of them added, "She had no other friend in the world."

"Early next morning those women came to see how I was, and to know what they could do. One lighted the fire, another brought a herring, another a remedy for the face-ache. Mrs B——'s boy has not been out of a night since first I saw him."

After a time, a Lady Superintendent offered for "Hetty," and the district has been fairly productive in its first year's work. It has had 67 subscribers for Bibles, and 75 for articles of clothing. We have received for it £53, 10s. in donations ; £7, 11s. for Bibles sold ; and £16, 11s. 10d. from the people for their own clothing. The expenditure has been as follows :— £30, 10s. 6d., salary ; £6, 14s., rent of Mission-room ; £20, 10s. 11d., returned to the people in clothing, and in payment for needlework ; £6, 1s. 6d., in aid and loan. The balance in hand for the district is £13, 15s. 11d. With regard to the true missionary work accomplished in this little circle, let the following letter speak. It was sent to the Lady Superintendent in consequence of an unfounded report that had gone abroad that this Bible-woman was to be transferred to another position. We give it *verbatim*, with a few retrenchments :—

"DEAR LADY,—It is with great grief that I hear that you want to remove my dear Mrs —— to another district ; but I hope, please God, you will not. I will tell you what she has done for me. Through her I can say, 'I once was blind, but now I see.'

'O'er ruin's brink I almost fell;
Glory to God, I'm out of hell.'

There was not a greater, blacker sinner than I was, yet God has had mercy on me. I was brought up with pious parents respectable, and I was the greater sinner, because I had had those privileges. If I were to give my life, a large book would not contain it. I am a brand plucked from the burning.

"Blessed be God I ever met with dear Mrs —. I think it would be cruel to take such a blessing from this district. The souls of the people about here are as dear to Christ as anywhere else. This is a place that requires some in earnest for souls. Oh, do not take her away! There is much work to be done here yet; let her stop a little longer. I will tell you what I was before she came to me.

"I was a drunkard, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, and a companion of all the lowest and most depraved people you can mention. I cannot tell you all I have been, but I will give you a sketch of my life this last year.

"Last October my dear baby was born, who is now in heaven; to my shame, I must say that I never was sober the whole of the time she was spared to me. Last Christmas (what a Christmas!) my wicked companions came on the Monday to fetch me out, and they had no trouble to get me, I was quite as willing as they. We went to the first public-house, and I shall never forget the call for the first half-pint of rum, and the landlord gave us another. I think I was tipsy four times on that day, and had soda-water to sober me. I hope you will excuse, and pray that I may be kep'

from ever falling again. I will tell you all, to shew what a hell-deserving sinner I am. On that Monday my dear baby was ill, and I took no notice. I thought when I had my frolic over I would attend to her ; but God thought otherwise, and when I woke on the Wednesday morning my babe was dead on my arm.

“ Oh, you would suppose that would have been a warning to me ; but no, it made me worse than I was before. I took to drinking harder than ever, and fighting, and every other sin. I did not care what became of me. I said there was no forgiveness for me, so it was no matter how my life ended. I had no friends to go to—no one to shew me the right way. One of Mr A——’s missionaries did speak to me at the door ; I remembered my dear praying mother, and I could not help crying. He spoke a word to me, but then left me. He did not pray with me, and I could not pray for myself. Oh no, the devil would not let me, and I went to the public-house, and forgot all. If that good man had prayed with me, it might have stopped me. But what a mercy ! I was brought in contact with this dear Christian woman that has been sent to be with us. Oh, do not take her away ! I had another temptation : I thought I would make away with myself, but I did not like to leave my child ; and then I thought I would kill my husband and child too. Ah, how often I have called upon God to strike me dead ! He knows.

“ Now it happened that a poor woman, who said she had been brought ‘ out of darkness into marvellous light,’ came to me, and told me she had come into the

right way through dear Mrs W——, and she began to talk to me. I said there was nothing but hell for *me*, but at last she persuaded me to go to the afternoon mothers' meeting. I only listened to what the others said, and soon dropped going there ; but then the same person came and persuaded me to go to the prayer-meeting, and I began to like to listen to dear Mrs W——'s prayers, and very soon she pointed me to the blood of the Lamb. I was very miserable, and, at first, I told her I did not like to be talked to, and I would not go any more ; but, blessed be God, she would not let me be. Oh, the miserable sinner she made me see myself ! Oh, the horrible pit I was hovering over ! Had not God directed her to me, where should I have been now ? I could not have gone on much longer. Oh, do not take her away yet. Let her be with us a little longer. This is a dark district. There wants some one in earnest for Christ here ! Do let her stop—what shall I do without a guide, I am such a young beginner ? What should we do without our little prayer-meeting in the morning ? Do let her stop, for the love of Christ ! Do let her stop, for the love of sinners, and their never-dying souls ! Do not take her away, she has been the means of bringing me to the feet of Jesus, and yet there are many to come to Christ. May the Lord help her and keep her ; and I hope that I shall hold on my way rejoicing in God my Saviour, and I hope He will prosper the work.—K. B."

Take this letter, dear reader, whoever you are, who have prayed for and helped the Bible-women ; and it is

surely but the beginning of a mighty answer to your prayers.

Walk along with "HETTY," the mission name of the Mrs W—— referred to, by which *we* know her, though the people do not. She is just returned from a fortnight's rest in the country with kind Christian friends, who delight to comfort the oft-weary frame of those who are Christ's servants, for His sake. She says in her journal—"My poor mothers were very glad to see me back, and had some new troubles to tell me; one was sick, and another's husband out of work, and some had been unkindly treated, which they attributed to my absence, as well as the worse behaviour of their children. 'If you had been at home, I should only have had to say I would tell you, and that would have been enough for them.' Poor things, how my heart rejoiced to see them, and to receive the little proofs of their affection. One brought me a purse, and another took her gold ring off her finger and placed it on mine as a token of love, and they said, 'We have been past your door every day to see if your shutters were open, longing to be the first to see you when you came home.' One brought me a small case of birds, when I was alone, saying, 'Oh, that prayer that you prayed when my husband broke his ribs, how it made me cry, and so it did him. We talk about it now sometimes. I wish you would pray with me once more.' As we rose from our knees, amid tears, she sobbed, 'Oh, I wish I were as happy as you; but I am such a sinner.' I told her we had been to the Friend of sinners.

"I asked a woman, who seemed deeply affected at our meeting, whether she would go to hear WEAVER, at St Martin's Hall. She said, while the tears streamed down her cheeks, 'I can't, for I've no boots.' I took my own off, saying, 'Will these fit you?' They did. She went at once, and becoming still more deeply convinced she was a sinner, returned to find me still among the penitents, and she found Jesus, too, with us—praise the Lord! After again praying with her, she exclaimed, 'I am so happy!'

"I will believe—I do believe,
That Jesus died for me."

I saw her a few days afterwards, and still 'so happy.' 'My husband's out of work,' she said; 'I have scarce anything to eat, and four children, but, in all my trouble, I am so happy. Can it be right?' To try her, I asked her what it was that made her so, and she answered, 'I am happy because J^sus spoke peace to me.'

"Again I called on her, and found her husband at home with rheumatism. Poor man, he seemed amazed at his wife's new-found joy in the midst of so much trouble, and 'wished he could get it too, but did not know where.' 'Oh,' she said, 'Mrs W—— can tell you. I will get her to come and see you. She spoke so plain; you did not understand the missionary, but *she* speaks as simple as a child, and you will be sure to understand.' I am sorry to repeat this, but, thank God, it was the way He was preparing the man's heart to receive HIS OWN message. Surely my Master went

before me, and prepared the way. The wife prayed so earnestly in the morning for her husband, that I felt sure God would hear the prayer, and I wondered not the man received me gladly. Tears of penitence rolled down his cheeks, and he became a humble suppliant at the feet of Jesus, while his wife again poured forth *such* a prayer, and we all three wept and rejoiced together. Before I left she said to him, ‘ Didn’t I tell you God would make Mrs W—— a blessing to you ? ’ but I believe it was her simple reliance on Himself that was honoured, as much as if I had heard our Lord say, ‘ My daughter, go in peace. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ Now husband and wife come to the meetings together, and spend the Sundays together, in going to public worship, and say they never were so happy in all their lives. Poor creatures ! they sold a bit of carpet for food yesterday, and had then scarce anything to eat, but are yet ‘ so happy.’ Bless God, I know their secret ; the less we have of this world’s good to draw our attention the nearer we try to get to Jesus, and insure His love, when all else frowns on us. They used to sit and groan over their ‘ ill fate,’ as they termed it, for they have seen better days, before work became so dead ; but now it is, ‘ Rejoice evermore. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.’ ”

Then comes a reference to the writer of the letter given in p. 111 :—“ Eight weeks ago, Mrs B—— professed to find the Pearl of Great Price. This is a day of rejoicing in heaven, for the dead is alive, and the lost is found. Her husband has cause to be thankful,

for, instead of finding her at the gin-shop, he finds her in prayer, and his meal ready, and the place clean, and a tract, or a chapter in the Bible, waiting for him, too. I do humbly thank God for condescending to use me as the instrument of her conversion the first day we commenced our nine o'clock morning prayer-meeting in the district, in which we steadily persevere, and have six, eight, ten, and sometimes fourteen present.

"*Sept. 1860.*—Bless God ! another wanderer restored to the fold, which once she knew. If there is any class of sinners I feel more for than another, it is that of poor backsliders, for I have been one myself. This woman had been led away by bad company, got into debt, and made away with her things. The husband, when he found it out, was almost broken-hearted, and said he must keep his money, and lay it out himself. They had not spoken to each other for seven weeks when she saw me. I was sure she had some deep trouble, and I told the Lord of it in prayer, and asked that, if it were sin, the precious blood of Christ might heal the wound. This seemed as a dagger to pierce her soul, and she cried aloud for mercy. When she unburthened her heart to me, we went on our knees again, and besought pardon, and as soon as she had found peace with God, she said she must seek it with her husband. She acknowledged her fault, and he forgave her. They asked me to tea with them, and we praised the Lord together.

"I felt, when I looked round at what the Lord was doing, 'I believed not for joy,' like the disciples of old ,

and I asked two missionaries to see if it was real, and not a vision or a dream, and they returned with joyfulness. The people send for me so often, that although the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak from the excess of toil. Still, the Lord is my strength. The poor people have named me ‘mother.’ It is so cold, they say, to call me Mrs W——. It would do your heart good to hear the prayers they pour forth.

“ But now, I have told you of the sunshine, must I not also tell of the storm? I have not said how many times I get the door shut against me, nor how often I am insulted and told, ‘I don’t want you.’ ‘I have no time to talk.’ ‘It is all very well for you to be religious. I will, if you will pay me for it.’ But words of warning or forgiveness find their way in sooner or later, only it takes time; and then there is the dirt, and rags, and filth, and distress, and misery. Sin runs down the street as in a mighty torrent. When they say they have no Bibles, and no money, I tell them they find money for the gin-shop; and while my soul rejoices on one hand, my heart aches on the other. I feel every day that it is not by might nor by power, but by HIS SPIRIT, that the Lord must move this people. ‘He is the God of the spirits of all flesh; is anything too hard for the Lord?’ H.”

As we set a high value on “Native Evidence,” especially when spontaneous, we will further illustrate the

people's welcome by a letter from a part of Lambeth, well known as "THE NEW CUT ;" first indicating the previous necessities of the district, in a letter from the Superintending Lady :—

" MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am anxious to tell you I have secured the use of the schoolroom in C—— Place for 'Phœbe,' and that, with much trembling and weakness, we have commenced our mothers' meetings there. You will be able to judge what the locality is we are trying to benefit, when I tell you that we cannot hold our meetings peaceably, but I am obliged to pay a person to stand and keep the children from quarrelling outside.

" At our second meeting we had thirteen mothers present, when a zealous missionary of the district kindly explained to them the object we had in view in gathering them together. I trust they will have a blessing, and that the good they will thus receive will more than compensate for the extra expenses incurred by the use of the room. We are waiting and hoping to see great changes in this degraded and poverty-stricken district, and although it is still 'the day of small things,' 'Phœbe' is not without encouragement. There is a reviving and refreshing influence pervading her weekly prayer-meetings ; they are well and regularly attended by several, who seem aroused to care for their souls, and two poor women, whom she has been urging to refrain from drunkenness, now feel it a privilege to join her at family worship in her Mission-room, at nine o'clock in the morning. She has been making suc-

cessful efforts to reclaim the drunkards of her own sex.

“One poor woman, who is trying to forsake her evil ways, has been much persecuted by her neighbours, but she is still persevering, and, after much anguish of spirit, has obtained peace of mind. She is very, very poor, and often does not know where to find her daily bread. She will not work on the Sabbath, and ‘Phoebe’ has told her she shall never want a dinner on that day, if she will let her know when she has been unable to earn one. I am not surprised a Bible-woman here feels discouraged. I think there are more drunken women in this district than in any other ; it is quite appalling, and needs something more than human wisdom to grapple with it. During her visitations one afternoon, she went into C—— Court and W—— Street, and found the whole of the women in the court intoxicated. She has now hopes of four of these women, and two of them attend a place of worship. One had not entered the house of God for thirteen years. It is for such as these we pray and labour, and I cannot doubt but that, if we do so earnestly and believably, we *shall* receive a blessing.

M. P.”

Such being the sowing-time, we now perceive the beginning of the harvest :—

“MADAM,—I hope you will pardon the liberty I am about to take in writing these few lines to you about our Bible-woman in the ‘New Cut.’ I have known her ever since she came on the district, being one of her first subscribers, and having had a Family Bible of

her. I observe she is one who says very little about herself, and I thought it might be interesting to you and the friends of the Mission, to know how the work was getting on, and that the Lord is blessing her labours ; and though it is but the day of small things, yet I rejoice to say that the seed is springing up, and will, I trust, bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God.

"From my first acquaintance with her, I found her an humble, sincere Christian, a true 'Phœbe,' one that lives to benefit her fellow-creatures. I must say I feel very thankful to God that she ever visited me, for I have profited greatly by her visits. I feel interested in her work, and I regularly attend her meetings, which are daily increasing ; and I am happy to say several have been brought to God through her instrumentality, and others are seeking Him. Two out of the number are backsliders, brought back to the fold of Christ, and also one of their husbands, who had not been in a place of worship for years. The wife persuaded him to attend the services held at the Victoria Theatre, and has told me since, it was a blessed thing for her that he went, for he is quite a changed man. He used to spend his evenings at a public-house, and now he passes them at home with his family, reading the Word of God ; they have also established family prayer, and I believe they are training their children in the fear and love of God, and that is a great thing, for they live in one of the worst courts in the New Cut.

"There is also another poor creature living in the

same court, who told me she was as dark and as ignorant about the plan of salvation as any heathen could possibly be when the Bible-woman first visited her. She said, 'I thought when she spoke to me of religion being such a happy thing, that it was not true, but she came again and spoke so kindly, that I listened more attentively to what she said. She lent me some little books, and invited me to her meetings, and I went, for when I read the little book, "Come to Jesus," I found it described my true character. I went to the meeting again ; I began to be alarmed at my state ; I left off working on Sundays ; and shortly after God shewed me what a vile sinner I was. I thought I saw hell opened just ready to receive me. I cried out so loud that the people in the house heard me, and said I was going mad ; but I kept on crying, "God, be merciful to such a vile sinner ; Lord, save me." At last, I thought I would go to the Bible-woman, and ask her to pray for me ; so I went, and she prayed earnestly that God would speak peace to my soul, and, thank God, I felt He had pardoned me. I left her house really rejoicing in Christ, and now I can say, though sometimes I have not even a piece of bread in the cupboard, that I never was so happy in my life. I have been in better circumstances than now, but knew not what true happiness was till I found Christ ; and I do pray that the Bible-woman may be the instrument in God's hands of bringing many more such sinners as I was to Christ. I bless God that ever she visited me.' This woman frequently speaks of herself in the meeting to others,

telling them she had been guilty of every crime, with the exception of wilful murder. I feel convinced she is truly sincere, not only as regards her own soul, but she is also anxious about her poor neighbours. She has one daughter, who is living in sin, for whom she prays earnestly. She was very much persecuted at first, but now they begin to respect her, and if they want a favour done they go to her, because they say they know she won't refuse them if it is in her power to help them.

"I have known this person lend her last penny, and give her last bit of bread to a poor hungry child that has been neglected by its drunken parents. I believe she often feels what it is to want herself, but she does not complain ; she says, when she compares her circumstances last winter with the present, she does not know how to be thankful enough ; last winter she was lying on the floor with scarcely any covering, and now she has got a mattress, a nice warm blanket, and a lined coverlet, many thanks to kind friends for them ; but still she is often without firing, for unless a friend gives her a coal-ticket, she cannot afford to buy out of her earnings at the embroidery work, though sometimes she works till two o'clock in the morning to pay her rent, as her average earnings do not exceed fourpence per day, and her sight is very bad. It is doubtful whether she will not lose it altogether. I know some people would say she would be better off in the workhouse, but she tried that last winter. She was there eight days, which was quite enough to make her feel the privilege of staying in a room of her own, where she

has the privilege of attending a place of worship when she is able, and quietly reading her Bible, which she obtained through the Bible-woman. She has now nothing to molest her, with the exception of the brawls in the court, and that she says is much quieter than it was. She is a light in that dark court, and I am happy to say, she is not putting it under a bushel, but letting her neighbours see it; I have no doubt but, with God's blessing, she will be made useful to many of them. There is a poor old bigoted Catholic living in the next room to her, to whom she often speaks of the love of Jesus, telling her how happy she is, and that she is not afraid of death; and the old woman says she wishes she could feel like it, for she is very much terrified at death, and talks about sending for the priest to come and 'put her to rights,' and then Mrs T—— tries again to persuade her to give herself to Jesus and He will take away the fear of death.—I remain, Madam,
yours respectfully,

E. W.

"P.S.—I just wish to mention that we do think it is in answer to prayer that those gifts of warm clothing and coals have been so kindly distributed within the last week; we have not forgotten to thank God and pray for a blessing on the donors. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

And thus the Saviour of our souls is still, and perhaps more than ever, using the "weak things of the world" to carry His "good tidings of great joy" into earth's darkest corners. Poverty, hunger, and rags are forgotten in that "joy," for it becomes a well-

spring in the soul, “ springing up unto everlasting life”—all the more precious if it arises in a desert, or if it purifies a den. This is the “ living water ” that can even quench the raging thirst of the poor half-starved body, for noxious stimulants which it so often craves, that it may forget its degradation, and remember its misery no more.

A thriftless, slatternly *woman* makes a disorderly *house*, in which there can be no “ joy.” She understands not the duties of a “ *wife*,” and she knows not how to turn it into a “ *home*.” She drives her husband to drink, and meets with ill treatment from him when drunken ; and, having none to sympathise with her, she grows reckless and drunken also, to drown her despair. This is the history of two thirds of the women in every low street of a large city, and of those in many a town and even village likewise.

“ I think,” says Phœbe in her journal, “ that if such couples were visited, and saw they had a sympathising friend who wanted to feed their starving souls, and teach them better ways, it would be the best means of lifting up a race of broken-hearted wives, and of saving many a family from ruin.”

Reader, it is the office of a kind, motherly Bible-woman not only to draw these people to listen to a message from God at the first, but also to watch them, amid their early slips and temptations, and win them back again into the way of amendment; helping them against the force of long habit. Remember the atmosphere, and the houses in which they dwell—their daily life so full

of avenues to evil ! If the number of these Bible-women were multiplied tenfold, they would not be too many for London only.

What have you done—what will you do, to create this agency in any neighbourhood which needs it ? And what will you do, when created, to sustain its efficiency by your influence and your prayers ? It is not enough to have begun it. It will be terrible to have let the people take hold of it, as they have already, and then fail to continue it. In fact, the Lord will not have it so. He would call it out as unpaid and free labour from among themselves. He is now doing this in many instances. But shall the upper classes of society lose the privilege of its regulation ? Shall those who possess wealth, education, and teaching power, forego their deep responsibilities ? They have now to deal with a preparedness of heart in the masses such as has been unknown in any former day.

The message of the Great Book has been delivered to them, and their ear is quickened to receive its tidings. In many and many a house it lies no longer on the shelf “a dusty Bible ;” but it speaks as they never heard it speak before ; and as Nineveh arose of old at the voice of the prophet Jonah, and turned from its evil way, so it is certain that we are living in times when to the working-classes of our larger city there has penetrated a conviction that “there is a Jesus,” and that He died to save them from their sins. Soon we shall see this conviction ascend from the poor man’s hovel to the palaces of our merchant princes and the

hearts of our nobility. The Lord is calling out His teachers for all classes of the community, high and low, rich and poor. It is no longer a day of priestly teaching only. Even outcasts are sent to outcasts, women to women, and children to children. We are all of one human family. Birth and death, sickness and grief, have bound us all together always, whether we would or not; and now THE SAME BOOK shall knit our hearts and kindle in us the love to Jesus which must shew itself in true love to one another.

It is this source of sympathy, and nothing lower, which will make the sanitary persuasions of the rich acceptable to the poor—which will overcome their dirt, their prejudice, their ignorance, and their idleness. When the Dagons of pride and selfishness, among the higher classes, fall before the ark of the Lord, “the poor shall have the gospel preached to them,” in life-work as well as in letter.

CHAPTER VI

Down, down, deeper down.

"**L**OWLY, my hands, be lowly,
Christ's poor around us dwell,
Stoop down, and kindly cherish
The flock He loves so well."

"There are dark and dangerous places—swamps and pitfalls—in the social world, which need bridging over to afford a way out to the miserable dwellers amidst degradation and filth. Blessings on those who build and maintain social bridges over the swamps of great towns!"

WE have gained some knowledge worth having in the day when we have read for ourselves any fresh page of human life, and reflected upon it. We must do this before we can understand how to help the sorrowful and aid the deserving. The relief bestowed by first impulse does them very little good, but every method of helping them effectually to help themselves, is worth all the study and prayer bestowed upon it. Such fresh pages of human life open before every lady who accepts the charge involved in superintending a Bible-woman, and it is pleasant to watch how both parties seem to find their training college in each day's practice.

The habits which have hitherto led to success in our particular kind of missionary work, have been, not to inquire or advertise for helpers, but to accept all that have offered themselves in either class—unless there has been some reason for *not* doing so—and a wonderful clue of providential connexion has often been developed in the right and fitting co-workers coming to light at the same period. After the primary explanations, we have referred Ladies to Ladies, and Bible-women to their fellow-agents, to learn what their duties are, and thereby to correct as much as possible their own first mistakes. This is helping the workers to help themselves.

The second month's experience corrects the shortcomings of the first ; and we have never attempted to dictate, that plans which suit one district must infallibly serve in another. A remarkable unity of method, however, has survived the dangers of this elasticity of rule, and the social form of tea-meeting which our conferences take, has smoothed down many a discussion on detail, which might have vexatiously arisen in a committee.

As many "District Visitors" have become Superintendents of Bible-women, we have had the frequent opportunity of hearing them compare their former with their present reception by the poor.

"I determined," says a lady, "to try the experiment of visiting one day in the week with my Bible-woman ; and asking guidance and wisdom from above, we started together. She took me at once into the very worst part of the parish. I have been a District Visitor in Bloomsbury these ten years, but I never saw anything like this ; and two hours' work made me so sick, I thought I never should forget the miseries and the smells.

"We groped our way in dark houses, up stairs without any banisters, and with great holes in them, requiring careful steps, and we entered rooms which looked as though they had never been scoured since they were built. Beds seemed wholly unknown ! Here and there we found a bedstead with some filthy rags upon it, but oftentimes it was a small litter of straw with a black cloth thrown over it. In almost every room we heard the same story—'No work, and no food !'"

So the lady goes deeper down, and further into, the real state of her district, fearing nothing with the Bible-woman by her side. She witnesses want and starvation—such as make her shrink afterwards from the sight of her own dinner—she goes home to reflect how best to mend this state of things.

Presently she says,—“I have learned to feel the great value of the Mission-room, where I can sit and talk to the women as I never could have done in these sad homes. I have powerful convictions that sin and drunkenness have chiefly produced what I have seen, so that I dare not indulge the desire I feel to relieve, which creates jealousy, as they think the Bible-woman shews undue preference in the cases to which she takes me.”

Then comes the more intimate sympathy,—“The full interest of the mothers’ meetings is felt only by the Bible-woman and her Lady Superintendent, who know the history of each individual.” Then the true kind of help is called forth—help spiritual, in the Bible readings, when the people begin to listen with eyes and mouth and ears, their hearts being prepared of the Lord—help temporal, too, as it can be afforded to the special claims of each case. The tools or coat are taken out of pawn—the girl clothed, and sent to service—the basket of fruit or flowers is stocked—the sick child restored by nourishment—the mother’s heart is touched, and she is helped on in the right way—the father is assisted to find work, and a sympathy is presently felt by the people, that has a very different

effect upon them to the undiscerning relief which only leaves a shilling or a ticket at so many doors—the lady being afraid to go in—and which a writer in the *Times* has justly compared to the operation of ‘dibbling beans.’”

Two or three streets soon afford a world of occupation to the Lady’s thoughts; and by her own help to the Bible-woman, and that of the personal friends she enlists in the cause, some amendments take place every week, and these mount up in a year.

“Two things ever fill the mind with amazement in this work,—first, the patient endurance of the poor; then, that so *very* few of the upper classes take any active personal interest in them. Do the inhabitants of the squares not know of, or not care for, the sufferings around them? If they knew, would they not strive to help these people, spiritually and temporally? To the few labourers the work is utterly overwhelming; and when those are worn out both in mind and body, they yet feel that not one-hundredth part of the misery is reached or assisted after all.”

Another District Visitor says,—“Every day presents to me a fresh and interesting view of the Bible and Domestic Mission; and its work, unlike any other, is no dull daily routine, but an ever-varying one. I am often struck at the reception I meet with as the Superintendent of the Bible-woman, in contrast to that I found in my capacity of District Visitor. In the latter character, the woman visited often felt it necessary to utter a few religious sentences, as she knew it

was my first errand to communicate spiritual instruction ; but I saw that the chief end of my visit, in her eyes, was the ticket I might be induced to leave with her for bread or coals ; which, as soon as I was gone, she would probably change away for gin. I now find I did not see her as she *was*—only as she wished me to think her.”

“ But how differently is the same Lady received after they feel she really knows them through the Bible-woman, who sees them at all hours ! When they meet her at the mission-room, they are no longer tempted to deceive her. They see she does not expect to find them in general a company of suffering saints, but of sinners such as Jesus came to save ; and such is the power of that Saviour’s love, that when this chord is touched, I doubt if there are any of our poor guests who do not for the time forget the temporal in the spiritual.”

“ We have to learn, like our Master, to hate the sin, and love the sinner. As a District Visitor, I am convinced that *my* calls often died off into an almost useless gossip about temporal affairs, while the dirty, careless, wicked women were neglected, to listen to the one who met my inquiries with the fittest account of her children at school, her endeavours to do her best &c.

“ I now think it is better to begin with the outcasts ; and in this new mission I have found a heartier and truer welcome from these, than I ever felt I had from my former list of mere church-goers. To the lost I can go

and freely speak of salvation, (the others were not sure they needed any,) and then a holy bond of fellowship springs up between us. The love of Jesus rescues the degraded, and encourages the weak—His sympathy meets their sufferings and mine—His love has been shewn to them and to me. It is no longer necessary to bribe them to hear. They see in the Bible-woman a missing link that draws them to the Lady, and they gladly invite me into their houses, really desiring that I should give them to drink of the water that shall spring up in them to everlasting life.”

When I visit a distant mission, they will even entreat me to partake of their scanty fare. Before, they only poured forth their hundred wants. Now, instead of these, I often hear, “Ah, ma’am, that was a pleasant meeting in our room the other night. *It is* true that with the Lord Jesus we shall not want any good thing. *I am* seeking Him, and I feel all the happier—and though I want many things yet, never mind—there’s nothing I want so much as the Lord ; and He does promise He will come to them that seek Him.”

“Now,” continues this visitor, “while I am watering others, I am watered myself. It is not my own work. I enter the houses in the love and power of Jesus, and that alone makes me welcome. I glory in daily proofs of what great things the Word of God can do. Day by day, I rejoice more and more to add to the work of a District Visitor, the experience I have gained in the working of the Bible and Domestic Female Mission.”

Our correspondent is energetic. We hope her remarks will not hurt the minds of any earnest, loving District Visitors ; but they must remember it is *native* evidence. She has found her own soul watered, as she delivered the Lord's message, and she is only one of many ladies who have thus received grace for their work, in their work.

But it is not merely the Lady Superintendent who goes down, down, deeper down among the strata of this home-mission field, and who is no more the useless "*dilettante*" visitor, as Miss Nightingale calls her, in the poor man's house ; every heart that has been won for God, either by her or by the Bible-woman, has its own circle of living influence in the foul and stagnant waters of these moral depths of society. Of such moral depths, we can give no more graphic picture than is to be found in a District, about four or five miles east of the Post-office, which has recently been reclaimed from the Essex marshes. "The enormous Victoria Docks have been excavated, and chemical works for the production of vitriol, and creosote works for preserving timber, have been constructed here. Enterprise has done battle with the marsh, and divided the dreary region into water for docks and dry land for warehouses ; so that what a few years ago was a malarious grazing ground has been transformed, as if by enchantment, into a centre of vast commercial interest ; and a town more resembling the worst spots in Holland than a suburb of London, has been rapidly grouped around such centre.

"But the houses of the work-people have been built in a 'dismal swamp ;' and only two years ago many of them appeared to rise out of islets of liquid filth—a state of things in which a sensible system of drainage is now aiming to effect an alteration. Meanwhile, poverty and starvation have combined with the old malaria to multiply cases of ague and fever, and all but the poorest fly the district as residents, leaving still, from Canning Town to North Woolwich, a population of from ten to twelve thousand people.

"Every gust of prosperity in commerce swells their number, and every succeeding stagnation overwhelms them with destitution. The cry for food and fire in the seasons of slack work is frightful. There are no gentry living among these poor, and their main refuge has been the Poor Law Union. The relieving officer is attentive and kind in cases of sickness, but he has no help for the able-bodied ; and what can he do among so many ? Many of the poor have died here from sheer want, under the very shadow of the palaces of London."

Such is the description given two years ago by an earnest working clergyman, the Rev. H. Douglas, who has been appointed to the spiritual charge of these "Londoners over the Border," funds having been raised by the energy and benevolence of one or two gentlemen in the vicinity, to build a temporary iron church, and maintain a resident pastor.

It appears that Mr Douglas wrote on the Christmas-eve of 1859, a letter to the *Times*, which, supported by

one of its powerful leading articles, at an hour when men's hearts were open, brought him a large sum in aid of his purposes of parochial benevolence. A week or two previously to writing this letter, he had applied to us for a Bible-woman for the Victoria Docks district ; and it has been proved that such an agency was indeed necessary to assist him to discern the true character of those who sought his help. It is woman's work that is imperatively called for, with the degraded women and girls of neighbourhoods like these, but the non-residence of LADIES in such spots throws a great difficulty in the way of superintendence.

God has made willing, however, the heart of a lady, already warmly engaged in our mission work in an aristocratic district, to go one day in the week, and watch also over the two Bible-women who are labouring in this distant spot. She is beginning to see much fruit from this missionary effort, and a sketch from her pen will not displease our readers.

“I feel it difficult,” she says, “to describe this district, it is so dissimilar to every other in London—a colony sprung one can hardly tell whence, and settled down near the scene of its labour—the scattered houses seem to have no reference to either pathway or road, and the place is neither town nor village—having all the wants of the former, without the advantages of the latter.

“One small iron church is all that stands to represent the House of God among them. Rough, low labourers from the dock-yards are surrounded by women of

degraded character, and with no better class to raise them, it is not wonderful that they have fallen very low, even in the eyes of men. But how truly has God's power been shewn here in the last few months! We have the large number of fifty women now present at our mothers' meetings, few of whom have hitherto entered the church doors.

"Shyly coming in at first, inquiring of their neighbours if any questions would be asked, and finding that nothing is talked of but the love of Jesus to the outcasts and sinners,—then assembling more boldly and bringing their friends with them,—this has been the history of our mothers' meetings, and they yield more encouragement every week.

"One woman, Mrs H——, has for the last ten years suffered alike from destitution and from the brute force displayed towards her by her husband; but now, by the aid of a loan, which she has faithfully returned, she is trying to support herself and children. She has long borne her trouble alone, but she comes to the Mission-room and tells us her grief, saying, 'Ah, ma'am, I have felt God Almighty much nearer to me ever since I joined the mission.' She is endeavouring to save a small sum in our hands, to repay a neighbour's loan, that she may feel 'she is an honest woman.'

"Another woman went home one night with her heart full of a few words which had been spoken about God hearing prayer. Her husband was very angry with her for attending the meeting; he declared he would go out and get drunk, and left the house accordingly.

How touching was the tale as she told it!—‘I felt so bad, my heart sunk within me, and then all in a moment I thought of God answering prayer; so I prayed Him to bring home my husband sober, and I prayed so earnestly, that I thought He would hear. Seven o’clock came—no husband; eight—nine—ten o’clock, and still I prayed, and then heard his hand upon the door. He walked in quite sober, and he has certainly been better tempered ever since.’

“I can give no idea of the amount of poverty and wretchedness of this locality; no hospitals near, no house of relief except the clergyman’s. None can walk through the unformed muddy streets without meeting many unfortunates of the lowest class—not hiding from day, but openly standing in groups on the path. (I often meet such.) These too sadly declare the habits of the place.

The dwellings are like the people. I entered a house lately, and found a large hole in the flooring, with a board carelessly thrown across it, as the only preventive to five small children falling through to the basement. All their clothing consisted of thin, ragged, dirty frocks, poor, half-starved, wretched little objects, and the look of hopeless ignorance, the filthy walls, the lack of furniture or comfort, told me that we had indeed reached the outcasts; for the two women from this house had begun to attend our meeting, and the first sign of improvement is, that they make an effort to render themselves tidier when they come to us. They have not been used to wear a bonnet, and their appearance on

our evening in this article of dress is a step gained towards the apparel of a modest woman.

It is a disrespect to the decencies of life that has lowered so many in their own eyes ; but no sooner do they begin to value the mission, and to listen to the Word read in their hearing, than a change takes place. One of them told me, that, when she could not come herself on Tuesday, she thanked God, and felt happy that day, as she knew there *was* a meeting, and that some souls would be cared for there.

In an after record it is stated :—

“ Mrs N——, one of the two reprobate women whom I mentioned as living in that miserable house, continues to attend the Mission-room. At the women’s little prayer meeting, too, she prays for herself, that she may be able to train up her children in the knowledge of the Lord. Last week she told me that she wakes many times in the night, and feels she must get up and pray for her own soul. She prays for others around her, and although at present in the depths of trouble and distress, she said, ‘I’m happier now than ever I was before.’

“ ‘ If the mission never did anything else, it has altered this and that woman,’ is declared by the trades-people of the neighbourhood. Some of these women have been known in their locality as those who would fight any *man* ; yet since they first came to the mothers’ class, in August 1860, they have seldom been found missing there, but sit quiet and subdued in demeanour, one of them saying, perhaps, ‘ No, do not give me any

work to-night. I want to listen to all that is read and said.' These are they who were never known to cross the threshold of church or chapel, but now they often accompany the Bible-woman to the Sunday-afternoon service.

"We gave a tea-meeting, for the first time here, a few days since ; and thirty-three women came. It was the first tea they had willingly attended. The love and sympathy of Christ was again the subject ; and it is by this theme that the people's hearts will be gained, and by this alone.

"One of the guests told me she had never been at such a gathering before, and 'Oh, how she had enjoyed it !' All their faces were pleasant to look upon, but especially that of Mrs Z——, more clean and tidy than I had ever seen her, sitting with a neighbour's infant asleep upon her lap. She is a great rough woman, and has been more terrible to meet with than most men in the district ; now I seldom hear of her as being intoxicated, and she has really become kind and gentle. She, too, said this had been the happiest evening she had ever spent, and she seemed to rejoice to hear the name of Jesus.

"I cannot tell who may come to us next, for it is actually true, that a woman who with her husband keeps a house of evil reputation, is anxious to join us, and asked to be allowed to bring some of her unhappy inmates with her.

"We gave permission to several of the unfortunates to seek our aid if they were really desirous to forsake

their sin. B. M—— has done so, and wonderful is the change in that woman's face—her gaudy finery is exchanged for clean and neat apparel, and when the Bible-woman invited her to our meeting, how earnestly she thanked God for the privilege of coming. ‘I should have liked to attend before,’ she said, ‘only when I came away, it was like passing from heaven into hell.’

“I am often informed in confidence by one and another that they are ‘surprised at seeing Mrs So and So here,’ yet they often promote each other's attendance. Last Tuesday, Mrs L—— told me she did not think she should have been able to come, for one daughter had borrowed her gown and another her shawl. ‘But when I said I could not go, my neighbour said, “Oh, do go, Mrs L——, I'll lend you my shawl,” and so I covered my old dress with it and came; it was kind of her, warn't it, ma'am. You see she so wished me to come.’”

Yes! the kindness of the poor to one another often sets us an example. They are so constantly in the school of suffering and privation, that they know how to sympathise; and then if they become His servants who Himself “had not where to lay His head,” they have had good training for unselfishness, and they do many noble deeds in dark and unknown corners of the earth unseen of men.

The valued friend who weekly superintends this district, coming, as we hinted, from a distance, because no

lady could be found in the district to do it, was herself comforted, and comforts us with the following touching incident :—

“ I left the meeting early,” she says, “ and as I was crossing the rail to the station, I saw a woman I had met in the Mission-room, running along with a bundle in her hand. I called to her, as I wished to know her name and something concerning her.

“ She told me that her health was bad, and that she had heart-complaint. ‘ I have had, ma’am,’ said she, ‘ a great deal of trouble. Though I never had any children, I have struggled with poverty, and have a sick husband to care for. Yet I do know what it is to have peace, with all my sorrows. I live a good distance from your Mission-room, but I heard there was a meeting, and I did so enjoy the prayer. I teach my little ones to pray.’

“ ‘ Your little ones ? ’ I said.

“ ‘ Yes, ma’am ; I gather some little ones together, and teach them reading, writing, and Scripture lessons three times a week in the evening. I don’t get anything for it, their parents are so very poor. I wanted to employ my talent. I had a talent, for I could read and write, and I had also some books in my possession. I have taught these children three years—and oh, ma’am,’ (she added, with such delight in her pallid face,) ‘ I gave them a treat last Christmas ; only tea, you know, with plain bread and butter, and a few sweets afterwards. There were twenty-three of them,

and how they did enjoy it! I buy a packet of books at 5½d. sometimes from London, and give them now and then as a reward.'

"I told her she would find a reward *herself* hereafter for such work as this; and she replied, 'Yes, I know that, but I really think I have a reward even now. My husband, ma'am, is not exactly what I could wish, but he's mine, and belongs to me, so I ought not to speak against him. He was ill in bed one day when I was obliged to be away at my work, and one of the children came in—she was about nine years old—"It's no use your coming in, my dear," said my husband, "Mrs S—— is not at home." "But perhaps," said the child, "I may wait." "Certainly—sit down."

"Well, ma'am, after a bit she says, "Mr S——, suppose we pray as when Mrs S—— is here." "Very well," said my husband; "do so."

"So she knelt down by the bedside and prayed, and in the midst of her prayer she said, "O Lord, send thy fire into Mr S——'s heart, and make him just what Mrs S—— would wish him to be." It had such an effect on my husband, ma'am, the next day he signed the pledge. Now, is not *that* a reward?"

"The good woman went on to tell me that she had derived the good she had thus scattered among those little ones from the instruction and care of two young ladies, daughters of a clergyman, who took her as an ignorant girl into their service. Here was seed sown, to be sown again in waste places; for this woman lives at the extreme point of the parish, has no district

visitor, no Scripture reader, no earthly help, and her work for the Lord is accomplished amid poverty and trial—for love's sake. She supports a sick brother too, younger than herself, by extra labour, that he may not be a burden to her husband. We shall of course gladly supply her with books for the children."

Gradually has the way been won by the two patient Bible-women in this district. At first they found that very few of the people would do more than just open their doors, give an answer that no Bibles were wanted, and resist all further intercourse ; but after a few weeks, their feminine faculty of getting a little pleasant conversation by watching opportunities, has, as one of them says, thrown the doors of the houses wide open, and now they may hope that the doors of the heart will not be shut upon their blessed Saviour, of whom they come to speak.

The personal visitation of house by house in this marsh district, presently makes it necessary to invite the poor people to a Mission-room, but not far off. The Mission-room must come to the marsh, if the souls are to be sought. SOPHIA's steady seeking first touches the heart of a dirty girl of twelve years old, to whom she talked a long while one day in a filthy house, and who, after her first visit, began to wash her brothers' faces, though, as the Bible-woman herself owns, to comb their wild hair seemed an impossibility.

But the next week comes, and the dirty children are found still cleaner, and the passage swept, and Polly is so pleased with the praise bestowed that she is chatty,

tells the names of all her brothers and sisters, and says mother wants to know about the clothing club. From sweeping, the week after she proceeds to scrubbing, and for the first time the house becomes a fit home for human beings. "Father and mother," she says, "now promise to be teetotallers." Take heart and courage, good "SOPHIA," who knows what this little one will teach some day to those around her. "Slowly, very slowly," your journal says your work goes on; but it is true work, and among the right class. You have gathered at last out of that moral desert forty-six women to your mothers' meeting. You have dropped the seed of thoughtfulness into many a heart living on the wages of sin, and you and your Superintendent are rejoicing over saved souls that shall be one day gems in the crowns you will receive from your Saviour, and which both of you will cast at His footstool, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to Thy name be all the glory." It is that name, only that name, that is winning victories over death and sin in these dirty hovels, and that is cleansing poor sinners from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit.

The Lady of this Mission adds:—

"I am convinced that *our* Mission work does not prosper, unless our Bible-women are aiming at a lower and wilder class of people than those reached by the usual visitors. It is not to the so-called respectable women that we wish to address ourselves, or to those who we know are reached by others. The Bible-woman's path is into the deep, dark alleys, down into

close kitchens, and up into garrets, where nothing but the love for winning souls would penetrate. It is from these abodes of wretchedness that the people will come who really value the light, the warmth, and the airiness of the Mission-room, and who delight to listen to the simple teaching there. There will be space for many years in London for those who will go down, down, deeper down!"

An afternoon visit to "SOPHIA'S" Mission is thus outlined by a friend who recently accompanied the Superintendent:—

"From two lines stretched across the room above our heads there hung various articles of ready-made clothing, prepared for sale, as were also the print and calico, which lay upon side shelves. The bright and gentle looks of the two Bible-women told that in them the poor had loving and sympathising friends. I was not, however, long left to contemplate empty forms and chairs, or to read the texts which adorned the walls, for soon the mothers began to arrive. First there came an aged woman, and then a young one, eager to shew her new baby to her friend THE LADY, and then one of the street girls, who had, however, put on a bonnet, because it was understood Miss —— did not like bare heads, and to please her, too, the shoulders and necks of all were covered with shawls or mantles.

"The girls were followed by a woman in a clean print dress, a striking contrast, as I was told, to the dirty finery in which she used to appear; and then crowded in mothers and babies, and every face seeming

to brighten as kindly inquiries were exchanged with the lady. Each, as she entered, quietly took her seat, only rising when her turn came to go forward with her pence, or to receive from the Bible-woman the work which occupies her during the meeting. Mothers tried to still their babies, and soon the little new comer lay fast asleep in the pretty cradle prepared for the sleepers.

"In reply to a question from me, my neighbour told me how their numbers had increased. 'Why, ma'am, this room won't hold us all now, and I remember when I and Mrs B—— were all our lady had, and we have come regular ever since.' This woman seemed deeply affected during the meeting, and was one of those who afterwards remained to ask about getting married.

"Before three o'clock the room was full, and the meeting having been opened with singing and prayer, the Superintendent read a few verses in John xiv., followed by remarks on loving Jesus; His love to sinners, and what the constraining power of that love should be, leading us to keep His word, and then the promise that He would manifest Himself to, and abide with those who did so follow Him. The love and power of Christ over Mary Magdalene was the absorbing subject of the Bible lesson.

"There was earnest and almost breathless attention; most were too anxious to hear, to think of their work; and even among the workers it was easy to see that the fingers were busy often, but as an excuse to conceal emotion. Others fairly cried, and indeed I felt that God was in our midst.

"Another hymn and prayer before we separated, and then many a congregation might have learnt a lesson of reverent retiring from these poor women. Some few remained; one to say, 'It is no use trying any longer to go on so. I must speak to James and see to get married;' and so it is with many more, they feel they must confess the suspected but hitherto hidden sin; and then another told 'how she who had so long had one who was not her husband was to be joined with him in holy union, please God, come Monday;' and a third was rejoicing in her newly-acquired wedding-ring. I could not but feel that God's Word had been brought home to many in that little room, and that their hearts had there been inclined to seek HIM who came to call 'not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

In the month of December last, the following letter was addressed to the Honorary Secretary of these Missions, by one of the Bible-women in a western district:—

"DEAR MADAM,—I have found it difficult to get the people to assemble for prayer, at my Mission-room, from causes of which you are aware; however, I gave it out at the mothers' meeting that there was great need of our coming together for prayer, especially at this season of the year, when so many fall into the sin of 'drunkenness, revellings,' and such like. I said, if any of them were willing to open their own rooms, I

would gladly join them. I found a very ready response to this appeal, and meetings for prayer were held, December 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. The first to give his consent, was a man who has been an infidel and a drunkard for years. He tells me he is determined, by the help of God, to cease from the sin of drinking. I have watched over this poor sinner, wept and prayed over him as though he were my own child, and I believe he will be brought to Jesus by living faith.

"When I first saw him, he was unwilling that his wife should have a Bible, and said, 'She never should have any of his money to pay for one ;' but recently, he even gave me sixpence himself. His wife says she has more cause to thank God for mercies this year than ever in her life, and that through this Mission. She believes the Lord sent me to her with the 'good news' that Christ Jesus died to save her. She is very poor, and much afflicted. Eight persons were present at prayer. I read Acts xvi., and we sang,

'Just as I am, without one plea,' &c.

The power of the Holy Ghost was felt amongst us. While upon our knees, several were openly confessing their sins, and imploring mercy. The husband then read the twelfth chapter of Acts, and, after singing and prayer, I begged to break up the meeting. One of those present said, 'I should like to keep on all night ; this is the first evening, but I hope it won't be the last by a good many.'

"12th.—Again we met—the small room quite full. The husband here said this was what he had been

wanting, but did not know how to set about it. We had special pleading with God for their unmanageable children, and we read Malachi iii.

“18th, (*Tuesday*.)—A prayer-meeting held in another woman’s room—twelve present. This poor sinner is in great distress—her husband a drunken soldier—she is left with two young children—there was not a chair to sit upon. Some sat on old baskets, others on logs of wood, or on an old bedstead. But that poverty-struck abode did not hinder our enjoyment of the presence of the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; it would be impossible for me to describe the power of the blessing we enjoyed. Nearly every one was in tears, some for joy, and others for sorrow of heart, desiring to be saved from the ‘wrath to come.’

“20th.—An aged woman next offered her room, ‘with all her heart,’ (a stone-floor kitchen;) ‘but,’ said she, ‘I an’t got any seats.’ She was given to understand that would be no hindrance. We read part of Isaiah i., and Matt. viii. Sang the hymn,

‘Come to Jesus just now,’ &c.

The blessing was great. Most of us stood all the time. This aged couple earn a scanty pittance by making small dolls and dressing them. The husband has lost one limb. In answer to a question about his soul, he said he was not saved, and wished to see us again. The wife added, ‘Well, this is what I’ve been awanting these two years. When will you come again ? Now mind, I shall have you here on New-Year’s day for a prayer-meeting, and we will get some seats.’

One poor woman came out with me with a blind child in her arms. Her drunken husband absconded nine months ago. She said ‘Well, Mrs ——, I am so happy I shall spend such a Christmas this year as I never did before. As regards this world, I have little or nothing, but I can say *Christ* and a *crust* is all I want, and I learned that through three words you once spoke to me. I cannot tell you how happy I am, not from anything in me, but *from what Jesus is to me*. What you read on Tuesday is just what I feel, (2 Cor. v.) “Old things have passed away; and all things are become new.” Oh, if you knew what a sinner I have been! but now I can bless God I am out of hell.’ This dear child of God stands in the street till twelve o’clock at night to sell a few articles on a small tray.

“21st.—A prayer-meeting held in a room in K—— Court, the crowning point of my district for sin and iniquity. When I first visited this court, a shopkeeper said, ‘Why, surely you will never venture up that wicked place!’ I told him I had a message from God, therefore He would protect me from all evil. ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘you must mind you don’t get killed.’ ‘My friend,’ I said, ‘they can’t be worse than a Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils.’ ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘I believe there is seventy times seven devils in the people who live up there.’ On hearing me read the Word of God in one house, a person outside called out, ‘Why don’t you throw her out of doors? I’d drag her out by the neck. You an’t half a black Catho-

lic ;' yet this very woman treats me now with great respect.

"On Friday I received a letter from three poor lost young women whom I took to Bethnal Green Asylum. They thank me for getting them out of the highway of ruin. At the close of last week I had quite as much as my spirit was able to bear, for truly my cup did run over. Did our dear ladies know what rich reward we Bible-women have in our work, they would be ready almost to envy us. I believe we shall have a great revival in W——.

"I hope I shall be pardoned for sending such rough writing, for I scarcely know how best to dispose of my time to my Master's honour. I do pray that you, madam, may be long spared to knit us together, and that we, who have to bless God for being thus employed, may not cause one pang of sorrow to your heart. It is my desire to be under subjection to my superiors. The Lord help me, and use me, and enable me to give HIM *all* the praise !'

"*April 24, 1861.*—These prayer-meetings have been held regularly two evenings in the week ever since they commenced. The person in whose stone-kitchen we met, in K—— Court, shews not the least desire to have them given up ; but, on the contrary, when it was said to her, ' You would not be at all that trouble, and put up with so much dirt, if you did not gain something by it ;' she looked up, and answered, ' Bless God, that's the secret ; I do gain by it—my soul gains by it ; and I hope others do as well.' The party replied, ' If I was

the landlady, I wouldn't have a lot of people to and fro in my place, making a dirt.' 'They shan't stop it,' said the good woman, 'for the folks shall come in at my window, if coming in by the passage is hindered.' However, we have not met with the slightest interruption."

The good Bible-woman then expresses her conviction that it would be very often unwise to give circumstantial reports of interviews, so that they shall be recognised, or even the district in which they occur defined; and we agree with this in her case and many others.

"I have been asked very often of late," says a judicious friend who visits in St Giles's, "by those who watch our work from a distance, 'Do you not think, that what is said of the Bible-women in "The Book and its Missions" puffs them up, and destroys the simplicity of their work?' As far as the testimony of one, who for eighteen months has had more or less intercourse with many of them, goes, I would say, most emphatically, that I have seen nothing of the kind."

We are thankful for this witness. We can only add, that we exercise considerable caution in this particular, and that, if we perceived that any one agent aimed at being written about, or prepared her journal with this view, we should certainly not meet the inclination. It is often with considerable difficulty that we penetrate the retirements of this true "woman's work" for God, or persuade our best women, and our most valued superintendents, to give us the histories in writing which, for joy, they cannot help pouring into our ear. There is

no earthly work into which sin and vain-glory may not enter, to canker the fruit of humble and holy labour.

Among the outcasts now daily won into the fold by the blessing of God, the greater proportion stand steadfast, but here and there one and another goes back. Those who win them often delay for a long time to individualise them to us, lest the fruit should not abide; but there really *is* such comfort in our hearts concerning hundreds that "were lost and are found," that, as there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, we believe it was surely meant that the Church militant should rejoice also.

Our avoidance of public meetings and platform addresses has arisen from the fear lest the excitement of public speakers should lead to personalities concerning the workers, or to incorrect details of their work. We only profess to give *specimen* annals of the Mission; and these are sketches from the life uncoloured, selected, because they suit our purpose, from a far larger mass of material. By their calm perusal in many a silent country retreat, as well as in large towns, ever-enlarging circles of Country Missions of the same character are being created.

The work, therefore, is doing itself, by the blessing of God, through a general conviction of the necessity of it, without the construction of a great Society on the ordinary plans. But still it is necessary to present facts as examples of the things intended. And as regards the individuals who may be mentioned, are not the small possible, and even probable evils of judiciously present-

ing such facts outweighed in the scale by the large and undoubted blessing which has followed on their recital?

We certainly believe that God has led us to the right way of getting down, down, deeper down *into the hearts* of the poor. Why are they so wretched in their circumstances and in their habits in our great metropolis of civilisation? Because the middle class, which ought to civilise them, has known so little of them. This knowledge is now being daily attained *in a womanly way*. Their women make their homes—and it is these who must be influenced. Laborious clergy, city missionaries, and Scripture-readers have, year after year, been aiming at them—and all honour to the pioneering efforts of good MEN! Many souls have they won—yet those “many” are still but few in the larger mass left unwon. The Lord, in this day of His mercy and power, is now awakening Christian WOMEN of all classes to a sense of their duty to their sisters—erring and outcast—and especially directing them to those measures which shall prove preventive as well as curative.

The hearts of the people are at this time softened to receive the good seed of the Divine Word—by an influence which is Divine also—it is beyond that of either man or woman; and it is silently fructifying seed sown in long past years. The returning wanderers now need just the kind of sympathy and domestic help which is shewn them by the Bible-woman, to whom they can speak unreservedly of their past; and, accordingly, the acknowledgment among them is universal,—that she has been a Link that was missing, and is found.

CHAPTER VII

What Lies behind many a Square.

“To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

WE beg to introduce our readers to another letter from a Lady Superintendent :—

“ As it is nearly a year since you first allotted me a Bible-woman for the G—— Square district, I feel constrained to send you tidings of the general progress of the work. Our mothers' meeting, which was established three months before ‘ MEDORA ’ came to my help, is now increasing. The average attendance every Monday night is upwards of twenty ; and those who are prevented coming on Monday night meet at her room on Tuesday afternoon,—the number of mothers' names upon our books being altogether about fifty.

“ We lately provided tea for forty-five women ; and we then had a most interesting meeting. Several have said they shall never forget it. They felt as they have never felt before ; and, far from being tired, they could have sat *all* night, and listened to the beautiful things that were told them.

“ In addressing them, the remark was made that the Men did not come to the Sunday service or the cottage lecture on Wednesday evenings ; and it was put to them very plainly, ‘ If any woman really wishing to go to heaven after death, would be content to go alone

without her husband, whom she loved best on earth?’ And they were exhorted to win their husbands to go with them to God’s house of prayer. This elicited from two of them the following remarks: ‘My husband said to me, when I was coming here, “No one cares for us men. You have teas, and all sorts of things, and there’s nothing for us!”’ And another timid little woman came forward and said, ‘My husband would join anything good that is begun for men.’

“You may easily imagine that I deeply regretted being obliged to leave them all just then, and pay a month’s visit in Somersetshire. But it has all turned out for the best.

“I asked of God that I might be able to get one hour’s solitude every day for prayer for my beloved people, and special guidance as to forming a class for our men. My heart burns with grateful joy as I tell you that I secured that hour every day uninterrupted, though my room was shared, on my visit to my friends. Was not this an earnest of the blessings which were coming in answer to faith and prayer? When I returned, a tea was arranged for the working men, in order to form a Bible class. Fourteen men came to that tea, and ten of their wives. Eleven men joined the class, which our excellent city missionary promised to conduct.

“At this tea I must tell you there were two men, of whom it was said to me, ‘They will not come; if you get *them* inside this room, you will achieve a victory indeed.’ The answer was, ‘I shall not get them in,

but I have asked *my* Father to bring them. I know they are coming.' Within half an hour of the tea-time one of these men was ill in bed; but he got up to come, for the first time in his life, to such an occasion, and the other of the two gave his name to join the Bible class.

"The last day in the year fell on a Monday, so I told my women we hoped to devote the last hour of it, from eight to nine, to prayer to God for future blessing, and thanksgiving and praise for past mercies, and we hoped they would all come and bring their husbands and friends with them. Words cannot express to you what I felt during this prayer-meeting, possibly the very first ever held in our heathen district. We were seventy in number. Now I felt as if my prayers had been indeed heard and answered, and that this would be but an earnest of a large blessing to be speedily poured out on our poor ignorant people.

"Our first weekly prayer-meeting was held on New-Year's night, from seven to eight. Fourteen came. From eight to nine the first Bible class for working men was held. Both were conducted by the city missionary. The people were first told of the coming week of *special* prayer, and were exhorted to be ready on Tuesday night to respond to the invitation sent four thousand miles across the sea. Two young men joined in prayer with great earnestness, and this gave much satisfaction, as they sat amongst the people. Eight men then sat round the table to begin reading God's Word together.

“ What dear Mr Thorold says of faith and prayer is so true, ‘We *have as* we ask, and we ask *as we want*.’ I did want so much that the hearts of the people should be opened to feel their need of prayer, and that the men should desire a Bible-reading, and I must tell you what faith God gave me about it. On New-Year’s night I myself was obliged to be in another part of the town, away from the prayer-meeting, &c., (you may be sure where my heart would have been.)—When I retired to rest I could not help thanking *my* Father that He had inclined the hearts of so many to attend the two meetings. Without knowing any particulars, I felt sure a goodly number had been present—as sure as if I had been told. But I ought scarcely to mention these private matters, when others of more importance remain to be related. The Bible-woman has a Bible-class for girls on a Thursday night from seven to eight. Last night she had ten, and has the names of fourteen who are in frequent if not regular attendance. She purposes, now we have a mission-room, to let these girls come to work on Tuesdays from five to half-past six. This class has long been wanted, for I find the work of the women is so imperfect, but it is difficult to keep up, as it wants the help of LADIES.

“ There is one woman in our district who this spring for the first time felt herself a sinner and found Jesus her all-sufficient Saviour. I longed to have told you of her before, yet was so fearful of speaking too soon, but there is no longer need of delay. She has since that time been brought through deep waters of sorrow,

and has found joy and peace in believing. Her great anxiety is for her husband, who at first was violently opposed to her going to chapel. Oh, how she longs for his soul, and for some time past we had agreed to pray together for him. Owing to her having a family of little children, it has been impossible to pray with her privately; so this week I proposed she should come to me at my own home. It would have done your heart good to see the joy beam from her face as she accepted the invitation ; and though very lame with rheumatism, how gladly she came half a mile, one bitterly cold night this week, for this purpose.

"There is another case in the district which gives me great joy. It is some years ago since a poor girl, sixteen years of age, fell, whilst carrying a pail of water up-stairs for her mother; her leg went through the banisters, and after having spent many months at different times in various hospitals, she was at last sent home as incurable. The city missionary begged me to call on her. At first it was almost impossible to get at her; she hid under the bed-clothes, and would not be induced to speak to me; but by perseverance and prayer, an entrance has been obtained, and now every Monday I go to hear her say six verses of the Bible and a hymn. She takes the greatest pleasure in committing these to memory, and though she constantly suffers great pain, especially in wet weather, her lessons are said without missing a word. The father and mother are elderly, and 'Hannah' feels herself a great charge on their hands; she would be glad of any orders

for crochet or any plain work. They are very poor, and have been so nearly starved that at one time the pint of milk allowed to her daily by your kindly mission was the only thing she and her mother had for food. This milk has been, humanly speaking, the means of her retaining her health, for she seemed fast sinking before she had it regularly. No one who saw this young sufferer a year ago would recognise her in the rosy-faced, bright, happy-looking girl which she now is. The other day she told me she tried to bear the pain, because she was sure Christ knew she had it to suffer. She is now able to walk about the room, but never to leave it; and her only change is to watch some children over the way, as they enter and leave the National School. This seems a real enjoyment to her. She is at times depressed with the thought that she is a burden to her family, but I have met this trouble in a small degree, by giving her work from our mission-room. I may remark here, it was her brother and his young friend who were the two young men who engaged in prayer on New-Year's night.

"If you are at all cheered by reading any of these particulars, I am more than repaid for writing them. I feel so full of joy and hope, that I was obliged to seek sympathy from one who is deeply interested and so affectionately pleased to hear the good news as yourself. If it strikes you that any part would refresh and help others, pray do what you think best with it; only one thing I must request, that no one shall surmise from whom these particulars have come. We are so

apt to grow self-sufficient, and I am sure our work will prosper only in proportion as *we*, the mere unworthy instruments, hide ourselves, that our Master may have *all the glory*."

We shall indulge our readers with a few more particulars, gathered from the same field, and in the same spirit.

In a back kitchen, in a little street not far from one of London's seats of learning, lies Catherine H——, on a bed of almost constant pain. The upper half of her window is level with the small, paved back-yard of the house, and her eye can only rest on a brick wall. Her aspect is somewhat refined and delicate. She looks as if she had been long in the furnace of affliction, and also as if the "Refiner and Purifier of silver" had been sitting to watch beside that fire. When she left the hospital as incurable, she sank, in her own idea, from a state of former respectability, as she was reduced to take this back kitchen three years ago. She did not know that the Lord had prepared for her a friend in the landlady of the house, who would kindly pay her all the attention her forlorn, sad state required. She had not a single relative upon whom she could lay claim. She had her right leg amputated when only seventeen years of age, by the late Sir William Brodie, but walked with a crutch, and was able to keep a situation of trust, under one mistress, for a long while afterwards. The mistress died, and then she supported herself by needle-work till, from a succession of abscesses, her right arm became utterly useless. For weeks and months together

she is confined to her bed by sores, which prevent a wooden leg from being fixed, and the pain of these is so great as to make sleep a rare blessing.

She has been brought, however, into a happy and resigned state of mind. "All the time I have visited her," says the above Lady Superintendent, "I have never heard her express a want."

On asking her "how she lived," she said, "The truth is, I do not know, except that God takes care of me."

"Have you nothing, then," I observed "to depend upon?"

"The parish pays my rent; and a kind lady, for whom I once worked, sends me a trifle, which just goes to my landlady for the expense of my washing; and you see she keeps me *so* clean; and I never can repay all her other kind offices. Often on a Monday morning I have not a farthing left to feed me during the week; but *the Lord makes up to His people for their privations*. When I was able to get to a place of worship, as I returned I have smelt the dinners, as they were carried along the street, from the bakehouses, and have had none of my own to come home to,—but when I got back to my room, I have felt no more want of anything, for He had taken away the hunger; and I really never do want anything now, for I cannot work for my bread, and God knows it; I say, 'Lord, thou knowest,' when I am come to my last sixpence, and always it happens that somebody brings me something. People I have never seen or heard of send me sixpence or a shilling; and, dear friend, I can't tell you how I

feel, when I say that for three whole years my heavenly Father has kept me like this ; yes, and given me all I really need, withholding only what is not good for me."

"Oh!" writes the same lady, "how I come away refreshed and strengthened from that dull, low room. She is sometimes in acute pain all day, and it only leaves her at midnight, and then she lights her candle and takes her little Bible, she says, 'to enjoy it.' I now carry her regularly half-a-crown a week from the Mission Fund, according to your desire ; and she often says, 'Don't let me have it if it robs a poorer person.' Our good Bible-woman is much delighted to visit her, and read to her, and to minister to her wants as far as possible. Catherine is above sixty years of age. She has always had a great dread of going to the work-house, but she is now brought to feel that if it be the will of the Lord she should at last be taken there, He will alter her mind, and make her quite willing to go."

But she never did go. After a few months more of suffering she arrived at the hour of release. A clean bed and bedding—with a pretty patch-work counterpane constructed for her by some thoughtful and loving little friends in the country—and also an easy-chair, were provided by the kindness of readers of the "Book and its Mission," and every alleviation that her great pain permitted was afforded. Her landlady continued to the end her gratuitous and self-denying services, preferred so greatly by the poor invalid to those of any nurse. "I am so used to be alone," she said, "I could not bear to have any one with me always."

She was consumed by abscesses, and ready to depart. Her Bible was her companion to the last, and the friends who had so aided her, by means of the Domestic Mission, were remembered earnestly in her prayers. She used to sit in the easy-chair, contemplating her bed, and seeming quite lost in gratitude and wonder. Her great trouble was that so much money was spent upon her. The easy-chair was left as an acknowledgment to her landlady. Her bed and bedding were transferred to the blind clerk in the Strand.* He, like Catherine, lifted up his eyes in simple and perfect trust to the Cross of Christ, the first fruits of another very interesting branch of these home missions. As he is now also gone home, the mission has once more reclaimed the bed, and it may still prove a blessing to some other child of want and sorrow in the hour of need.

Yes! And how many more suffering and weary ones are there whose hidden abodes lie behind the squares of luxurious London, in high garrets, and in dark, back wash-houses below the level of the street! —those who can only *just* live, when they have earned their utmost, on a crust of bread and a cup of tea; weakly sempstresses with bad eye-sight, helpless invalids, trying to eke out the scant allowance of the parish with their stiff, rheumatic fingers. Forced to live underground for cheapness, how many, fair and gentle lady, whom a shilling a week from your superfluous finery would help to better diet, or a healthier

* See p. 92.

home. Those who best deserve this help will never din at your doors. It was woman's mission to woman, in our great city, to have sought them all out long ago. We have too entirely left it to laborious curates, and earnest city missionaries, and given up the misery as overpowering. It might be mended if family were taken by family. But it is into a sister's heart that woman's troubles can best be poured forth—the troubles of a confined dwelling, for instance, where so many must live together. "You cannot know, ma'am, what it is never to be alone. I can't kneel down before my children. I try to pray when they are asleep."

Listen to the story of a poor widow, who had once crept out to a mothers' meeting. A visit was paid to her by the Lady Superintendent one bitterly cold afternoon in February—and the portrait is sketched by the same hand as the above:—

"I found her in a back kitchen, which once was used for a wash-house. The pavement of the back yard came nearly to the top of the window, and so obscured the light that I could at first see nothing but a speck of fire in one corner of the room. A large bedstead filled the tiny place so that it was hardly possible to get in. I groped my way towards the fire, and when near enough to hear the feeble tones of the inhabitant of this dark abode, I only recognised her voice, for I could not distinguish her features. She was sadly bent with pain from rheumatism, and had also bronchitis, which hardly allowed her to speak;

but I will give you the substance of her answers to my questions, spoken in short, interrupted sentences.

“‘It is Miss ——’s voice—I know it; oh, how good God is! I have only the bit of fire you see in the grate, and I was just praying to Him to send me help; for you see the damp on the walls.’

“I looked, and the walls were damp, and in places wet to the touch, from the ground nearly up to the ceiling. I asked how she lived.

“‘They wont allow me anything from the House, because I’m not old enough, but they will take me in; and I would go, as far as I am concerned, but what would become of my three little children? The youngest depends on me, he is only seven; the two others have each got a little place; the little girl (only nine) nurses a baby, and her mistress likes her so much that she has taken her into her house altogether, but I wash and mend her bits of things every week. And the little boy is gone to a greengrocer’s to run errands, and they heard of my situation, and have given him his meals. So you see *I leap from joy to joy.*’

“‘What do you take,’ I asked, ‘for your cough and pain in your chest?’

“‘I have not had anything to-day but a halfpenny-worth of tea-leaves, and that seems to soothe my cough and chest.’

“Only a handful of firing saved from the day before, and only one halfpenny to spend for herself and little child, the whole of that bitter cold winter day;

and yet not one murmur, but all thanksgiving to God for everything He did, and exclaiming at the end, ‘I leap from joy to joy!’ Oh, well might I learn a lesson from this humble, bright Christian! Shall we, surrounded with all our comforts and luxuries, ever murmur or complain? As I walked home that afternoon, I was humbled to think that, with all my superior privileges and comforts, I could not feel such faith as this widow, hidden in her damp, dark, back-kitchen, resting so peacefully on her Saviour’s love, that the deepest poverty could not shake her faith in Him. I was filled with joy to witness the strength and reality of vital religion. How rejoiced I should be if all who do not know what true Christianity really is could see such a picture as this.”

We believe these true tales from the book of life in London do so much good to the hearts they soften, that we will close this chapter with another scene from the report of the Superintendent of the LIMEHOUSE FIELDS Mission :—

“I know a poor shoemaker,” she says, “a most intelligent man, who in his early days was an infidel, and only read the Bible to scoff at it; but one day he was so struck on finding so much in it suitable to him as a man, that it led him to give up his infidel principles and become a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. He was greatly afflicted for years, and he had a family

of eight children. Never will one visit I paid to him be forgotten. Twins had been born to him ; one had died a few weeks old, and it was lying in its coffin on the drawers ; five little ones were in bed ; the grieved mother was nursing the living twin, which to all appearance was dying ; the father, at another part of the room at his shoemaking, was giving orders as to what was best to be done for the sick infant, yet, meanwhile, ready to converse on the realities of religion, and the influence it had on his own mind.

“I always felt when in his company that I was breathing a pure mental atmosphere, his knowledge of Scripture was so profound, and his application of it so striking. That morning I had carried them some relief, and turning to his wife, he said, ‘It is wonderful ;’ then, speaking to me, he added, ‘We have not any of us yet broken our fast, and I was hurrying to get some work home when I heard your foot on the stair, but did not know who it was. I said to my wife, there is some angel of mercy coming to our help.’

“At last this poor man himself became so weak from low living combined with the progress of disease, that one morning, going to his room, I found him on the bed, and all his tools packed up. It was a grievous sight—the young children, the delicate wife,—the provider for all could work no more. I was so overcome that tears would flow. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘I am, even now, richer than many nobles of the land ; people want but little in my circumstances, a cup of cold water is all I care for—but that kind tear of sympathy, it is sweet,

and denied to many who can command everything else.' Then, rousing himself, he spoke of God's power to support ; and alluding to a poor woman who had been found dead on a dust-heap close by, he said, " Even in *such* circumstances God can so manifest Himself to the soul that we shall not heed them, being carried above and beyond them to the kingdom of heaven."

" And then there came the closing scene. In the beginning of the winter that family were compelled to take refuge in the poor-house, and I visited him in the infirmary there. He lived but a few weeks ; almost his last words were, ' I shall soon be with Jesus, my Lord and my God.' When I saw him in the dead-house, I felt, as I gazed on his remains, that an heir of glory had passed away. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the *death* of His saints. The next time I visited the widow I found that one of her little ones had joined his sainted father, and she was bereaved indeed. She is now out of the house, struggling with great poverty ; the children have since had the scarlet-fever and measles. The poor widow has taken her aged mother to her room, saying she is such a comfort to her now that she has no husband, and she cannot bear the thought of *her* dying in the poor-house. I am trying to do something for them, and look upon them as a legacy for whom believers in Jesus will care."

A year has now completed its circle since the purified spirit of that poor shoemaker took its flight from the workhouse, to enter the mansion prepared for him by Jesus, his Lord and his God. Since then,

his widow has struggled on with her babes, proving the faithfulness of their father's God, who told him in His word to leave his fatherless children, with the promise, "I will preserve them alive, and let thy widow trust in me." To those who have assisted the case, the following statement may be interesting. The Hon. Mrs W—— kindly and promptly took two of the girls into her Industrial Orphan Home, Brockham ; one without any charge, the other by paying a small sum, and providing an outfit. In this house they are not only educated and trained to be useful house-servants, but in case of leaving their places, find shelter again till another situation offers. One of these girls is still in the home ; the elder is in a clergyman's family. During the year there has been received from those who delight to cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, £21, 12s. The following is a statement of how the money has been spent :—Paid into the London and County Bank, to account of Orphan Home, Brockham, £5 ; travelling expenses for widow and children twice to Brockham and back, 17s. 9d. ; clothing for widow and children, £3, 3s. 4½d. ; articles of furniture and bedding, 18s. ; wine and meat in sickness, 6s. 8d. ; expense of moving twice, 4s. ; printing 100 monthly nurse-cards, 1s. 6d. ; in weekly allowance from February to December, £11, 0s. 8½d. ; making a total of £21, 12s.

"The funds intrusted to my care are now quite exhausted," says the Superintendent, "but not so the treasury of God, in whom the widow and fatherless are still exhorted to trust."

Those who remember the accounts of this LIME-HOUSE FIELDS Mission in the "Missing Link," will be glad to know that the sum of £24 has been collected for Bibles in that district alone, which have found their way into the most miserable dwellings. On speaking to an active LADY collector of what had been done in this particular district, says the Superintendent, she expressed her surprise, telling me that she herself and another lady had canvassed this very ground, and obtained comparatively nothing. "Priscilla" herself added, that she went over the same space for a long time as a tract-distributor, but that *she knew nothing of the people or their wants till she went with the BIBLE in her hand. It was this that opened their doors and their hearts to her.*

"Yes, we do feel that God is blessing the constant working of the Bible-woman by awakening a desire in the hearts of the people for religious instruction, as our crowded room on the Tuesday evening proves. Indeed, we cannot invite any more to attend, because we have no space for them, (a larger Mission-room is here much needed.)"

There is also a decided improvement in the tempers and habits of our poor. One woman, when asked what good she got by attending the meeting, answered, "Before I went there, I was a drunkard, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker; now, I bless God, I am neither." Another declares, "I had a most passionate temper, and used bad words to my children, so did my husband; now, we should be ashamed to do it." Others, to use their

own way of expressing themselves, declare, "We are gladder and gladder that you have come among us." And even those who do not evidence this change, are not so open in their sins, but will slink away when they see "Priscilla," or if she comes upon them suddenly, both men and women will apologise to her, and are ashamed that she should see them not quite sober, or hear them make use of improper language.

Though the distress is most appalling, and "Priscilla" calls five or six times for the single penny, a revolution of ideas is taking place. Many who thought there was no harm in their trying to earn a little on Sunday, or get through their cleaning on that day, assure "Priscilla" that they have not done so for some time. One woman, who, at the commencement of this Mission, was found in a filthy state, on the Superintendent calling last Monday morning, and telling her her room was not quite as she should have liked to find it, said, "You see, ma'am, yesterday was Sunday, so that it has not been cleaned since Saturday night, for I do now try to keep the Sabbath as much as I can, and I feel more contented and happy like than I did." This woman would sit for hours with her arms folded, the picture of sloth and despair; she now seems to have begun a new life, and when she can get work will rise early and sit up late to earn a little for her children.

Does not the thought arise out of this fact, that the same great Book has yet, in the simplicity of its power, to make its way not only to the poor, dirty rooms that lie behind the squares, but to the cool and sheltered

drawing-rooms in the squares themselves ; to make its way to many a listless, selfish occupant of those brighter dwellings, who never thinks of any existence beyond her own, or who is saying, mournfully, "My life is all leisure, and what shall I do with it ?"

To those also there needs to come "THE MESSAGE FROM GOD," and in what form ? In the words of one of America's most gifted sons, it is, "That God has a definite LIFE-PLAN for every human person, guiding him and her, visibly or invisibly, towards some exact thing, which it will be the true significance and glory of their life to have accomplished."* If any should read thus far in our little book whose souls are pining for the perception of such a life-plan, we will try and help them to discern it. Perhaps they are already helped. The facts we have placed before them shew, and we hope prove, that the poor who want teaching, and raising to a sense of God's purpose for *them*, are best approached, and prepared to listen through the medium of a woman of their own order.

Our individual friends may now in any part of London inquire after such Mission-rooms as they have here heard or read of, and be informed what help they can render to such missions. This will be much better for a stranger LADY, than exploring a low London street in her own person. The qualification of a good Bible-woman is, that she too should have listened to God's message ; then she can be made God's messenger, not ours. His word in her hand and in her heart will

* "The New Life," by Horace Bushnell, D.D. 1861.

open HIS way, as we have seen, and both she and we may follow.

First, He will have inclined some of the outcasts to listen and refrain from deceiving, as is their ordinary habit, then He will have made them desire to come to the Mission-room, and be taught more about the message; not by hundreds, but by dozens and by scores. Too large a class destroys the individuality of this work, and its peculiar use in preparing the people for other and further teaching in the public sanctuary; but let any one desirous to help obtain access to one of our small centres, and it will be seen how all kinds of work can spring from them—a class can always be found for you of women, girls, or boys. You must meet them still in the strength of the King's message, which you cannot do unless you have felt it for yourself. When they listen to that, you will come at their hearts, and they will touch yours by many a tale of woe and hardship, for which it will prove a life-work to discover the best remedies; temporary relief will not meet the case, nothing but helping them to help themselves. Yet if you carry to them the ancient and priceless Balm of Gilead while the aspect of their lot changes for the better, so certainly will yours in the joy of ministration.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Lady's Place in the Mission-room.

"Having gifts differing."—Rom. xii. 6.

“A thankless, heartless pauper eateth his unsatisfying pittance,—
Yet would he bless thee and be grateful, didst thou feed his spirit;
And teach him that thine almsgivings are charities, are loves.”

--*Proverbial Philosophy.*

WE hope it is not possible to deduce an inference unfavourable to LADIES' work among the poor from any sketches hitherto supplied of what may be done by the right sort of Bible-woman *without* a superintending Lady. If we had a motto for our work at all, it would be, "MINISTERING-WOMEN, TWO AND TWO;" and that not two Bible-women, but a BIBLE-WOMAN and her LADY.

Still, we should wish to rescue our Agent from being governed by a Committee—*i.e.*, from having many mistresses.

In the system that has framed itself out of our necessities, we need a worker and a watcher—the hand and the head. The Lady Superintendent (happily we can point to more than a hundred instances) watches over her Bible-woman for her soul's good, that she may minister to the souls of others. Very beautiful is the affection mutually shewn by these distinct parties as they "wait on their ministering," and as the Mission comes into its full scope and regulation. If they do not work in harmony, they had better not work at all in co-relation; for self-will on the one part, and exaction on the other, would ruin the design,

which is to bring the far-off classes of society together in the persons of *these two*, who shall then act upon the outer world with their united wisdom, and by the power of their united love and prayers.

It is not on the cold and dignified Lady, who desires wearisome work done for her, and looks upon the affinity as very like that of mistress and servant; neither is it on the Woman of excitable temper, rashly answering again, and fully convinced she should do better if left entirely to her own devices and administrations;—it is not on agents like these that the Lord sends showers of blessing; yet those showers are beginning to fall in many places. The Superintendents' letters, which we so constantly receive, clearly evidence the kindly and sympathising spirit in which affairs are very generally proceeding. Nearly three hundred sisters in Christ, the rich and the poor together, have resolved to help each other to explore and to reform those endless successions of courts and alleys and yards, walled in from the light of day, which hide so many hundred thousand little worships or sin and suffering behind London's lordly squares. These fellow helpers are very happy and successful in their aim already, and the number of the Bible-women is ever recruiting from among those they go forth to save.

The rule of our teaching we have found ready made for us in 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6, 7—"In much patience;" "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, BY THE HOLY GHOST, by love unfeigned, BY THE WORD OF TRUTH, by THE POWER OF GOD." There-

fore, as in the case of the apostle Paul, “our mouth is open, and our heart is enlarged.”

“Our ladies should be very godly ladies,” said a thoughtful and really humble Bible-woman, “or they hinder rather than help us.”

Instant in season and out of season, both parties must wait on their ministering ; but what if the Bible-woman has to wait on, or wait for, an unpunctual lady who has no method in her arrangements—who suffers slight and unimportant engagements, and perpetual flittings and absences from home, to prevent her visiting the sick and suffering, to whom it is better she should herself carry help than her humble friend ? “It is generally a mistake to make a poor woman treasurer or almoner,” says the wisdom of old time ; yet in many a case, we fear, unless the Bible-woman were made so, the sufferer would die ere any other assistance reached her.

But, again, as we have said, we rejoice that in so singularly few instances, as the agency now enlarges, is anything expressed but love and joy in each other’s aid on either side. This also is of the Lord, who sent forth His disciples two and two during His own sojourn upon earth. In each of the ten postal districts of London we are *doubly* touching at a dozen points (more or less) the misery of London, and beginning steadily to raise it into self-helpfulness. The supplies of money and clothing, all *spontaneously* sent us, have sufficed hitherto to our extended need ; and though we have never had as much balance at the banker’s as would

carry us through the claims of the next two months, we have had little anxiety about money. The silver and the gold for the Lord's work is in His own hand ; and as He has seen it well, He has placed it in ours.

"The fact is now made evident, by the work of the Bible-women," says no less an authority than the *Quarterly Review* for October 1860, "that not only in the poorest class may efficient agents be found for the evangelisation of the lowest and most degraded, but that this agency may be organised, under due superintendence, on the most extensive scale."

In approaching the close of a third year of the Bible and Domestic Female Mission, we cannot but review with deep interest the way by which God has led us. It has been HIS leading all along, for, from the time He put the first instrument into our hands for this purpose, He has so supplied us, day by day, with work to be done, that we have had no time to go out after new schemes and experiments, but simply to take up and use, according to our gradually-earned experience, the links, as His providence presented them.

For six months, in 1857, one good woman worked in St Giles's alone. This worker, "MARIAN," is now, by the same providence, entirely laid aside.

In the year following, 1858, five women, in Paddington, Clerkenwell, Gray's Inn Lane, Somer's Town, and Westminster, had followed the example.

In the second year, 1859, their number had multiplied to thirty-seven.

In the third year, 1860, that number had risen to

137 ; and at this period, May 1861, it is more than 150. These women have been selected with considerable care, (from a far larger number offering themselves for the position,) always endeavouring to discover whether the post was sought in a true missionary spirit and for the Master's sake, *not* as an "*industrie*" or trade. We have earnestly sought to keep up the standard of "the woman wanted," as that of one for spiritual work. Not in the sense in which it was misunderstood—"I suppose you wants me to spound and splain," but as a true-hearted Christian, who having felt the words of Him "who spake as never man spake" for herself, can, with motherly love, bring them forth in all their searching power, to the lowest of the people.

Our women are not all of the same order of mind and our best are not perfect, as themselves would own. We have many like MARTHA, selected purposely by her particular Superintendent from the most uneducated class—a truly humble, simple-minded, and self-distrustful poor woman, who, by the careful, constant training and direction of her valuable guide and friend, and the blessing of God, stands in her district to this day, just as she is depicted in the "Missing Link," persevering and unspoiled ; it may be added, that her Lady has diligently sheltered her from the voice of popular favour, and that she sees perhaps as much danger as benefit in the monthly meetings even of the Bible-women, which give them an opportunity of comparing their experiences. We scarcely agree with this, but opinions *will* differ on certain points. It is to our-

selves, and we think to them, a source of perpetual interest to discover and compare the various ways in which different women seek and obtain access to the people.

If you talk to one of them, she will tell you, in her own simple fashion, "I get on in this way. I go to call on the wife with my books, and say, 'Shall I bring you a Bible?' Mayhap the man is sitting by, and he says, 'Bible? no! A loaf of bread, if you please, I can eat *that*.' But would you not like to know something about the Bible? Did you ever hear of Jesus? 'Oh,' he'll say, 'there's so many religions!' 'I only know of one, the religion of Jesus! the religion of a crucified Saviour! Those arms are ever open to receive you, even *you!*' and when they see I'm in earnest, then they say, 'Well, Missis, bring me a Bible,' and then, in a little while, how they love that Bible!

"Once I went to see a poor woman, very ill, and in great distress of mind. I read with her. Her husband, a shocking, wicked man, was there. I knelt to pray, and prayed for *him* before I'd done. The Lord touched his heart. Next day I saw him, he said, 'I could not sleep last night. I was forced to get up and pray for myself, and I thought how strange it was you should have prayed *for me*.' I then had further talk with him, and sold him a Bible. When I meet him now he says, 'Have not you anything to say to me to-day?' 'Yes,' I answer, 'but have you nothing to say *to me?*' 'Yes, Missis; I have read some of the Word of God, and I've prayed this morning;' and so we get on.

"One of the people said, lately, 'I always love your visits. When the servant comes in at the door, the Master is not far behind.'"

Blessed testimony ! The poor know who are *the right* Bible-women ; never those who are full of themselves rather than their Master. Then they are very likely to say, in their own vernacular, "That woman has too much jaw." The true missionary *for us* is one who will penetrate everywhere, and not be above anything. She who says, "The man swears, so I don't go in," is just the *contrary* to the "woman wanted," whatever she may think of herself and her capacities.

As it is often observed in happily-arranged domestic relations, this work goes on best when the lady and the woman have supplementary gifts. One having marked faculties or qualities which the other does not possess. Some of the women are methodical, and really *can* plan their duties best in their performance ; others have willing hearts, but little head. Yet if these persons have also humility, docility, and love, the right Superintendent for them will make them extremely useful, while one who is not herself methodical would impatiently cast them aside.

Education is training ; and a lady, if educated, has surely been taught to methodise her occupations. In undertaking the charge of helping a Bible-woman, this will be her earliest duty. She little knows at first what will grow out of the mission to which she promises herself to give perhaps half-a-dozen hours in the week, merely to receive the accounts, to cut out the

garments, to meet the mothers, and to visit a few sick cases. She begins, we will suppose, with the love of Jesus in her own heart, and an earnest desire to take up some work for His sake. Her daily business is first with herself, her next with her Bible-woman, in whom she may naturally expect some ignorance and a little prejudice, which will by degrees melt away, if she has a loving and superior helper—a sympathising thinker and co-worker, who prays over the heaps and shoals of miseries, all the sorrowful results of sin, which her poor sister brings to light, and considers with her how best to deal with each. “Blessed is she that *considereth* the poor,” and carries out the wisest plans to help them to help themselves.

But this is not done by merely sitting in the parlour or in the mission-room. There are exceptional instances in which even a lady, suffering on her sofa, has maintained a very blessed influence in the district, merely by her unceasing prayer for individual cases. In general, however, there must be visitation by the lady, if she is to have influence with the people; she must see for herself what is reported to her.

We have received the following from a Lady Superintendent, who is indefatigable in her care for certain streets, which are called by the City Missionaries “The St Giles's of the West.” At our first interview with this lady we were chiefly impressed by the circumstance of her delicate health. She scarcely left her house, and though she seemed earnestly pious, and desirous to bear the expense of a Bible-Mission, we could not

imagine her physically able for practical superintendence; nevertheless, her heart was devoted, and she began by degrees, thinking she would "do what she could." At the close of seven months' work, she writes, concerning a proposed re-division of the district, as follows:—

"Please leave us the fearful, iniquitous N—, S—, C—, and K— Streets, and give away the rest, if you please. Thank God for more workers. I have so much to tell you, that I never find time to write. We are taught every day no longer to consider it as *our* work, but as GOD'S only. I feel as if I had touched the spring of a steam-engine, and it had carried me off at a pace which almost frightens me. We have asked for the blessing, and it is come, and as our heavenly Father has made use of such poor materials, and done so much Himself, we cannot help hoping that greater gifts yet may be in store for us—a rich harvest of souls! Our special cases of conversion are all before God, but would occupy sheets if I wrote them.

"Few people would have a conception of the street in which we are working—certainly not from its outward appearance. Many parts of our large city may be much poorer; but few, I think, can be further from God. Every sin short of murder is daily committed there. It has its dens of thieves and its traps for evil of all descriptions. The state of public opinion in it is such that, though almost all the parties living there are unmarried, one of its most respectable inhabitants asked me seriously if I did not think her neighbours

were united in the sight of God, although not according to the laws of men? The best proof of a commencing change of views on this subject is, that two couples have requested our assistance to enable them to marry, after having lived for years in sin, and others have followed the example at their own expense.

"Our room has long been too small to accommodate the people. We have now taken the whole of our little house, and the two upper rooms are being converted into one for our evening classes. You ask what my husband says to it all? He comes frequently to close my meetings with prayer, and they all love *him*. He says 'he thinks he must take a house in N—— Street, and live there altogether, to satisfy me.'"

This district of N—— Street affords a remarkable example of the way in which God raises up friends to forward the work which is conducted so earnestly and affectionately.

It is probable that our Missions may often have been commenced with a strong spirit of individualism, and a desire to work in a quiet way, without being interfered with; but, as the field opens before us, the need becomes apparent of a gracious, courteous Lady, who will gladly accept all the practical help that is offered to her, and arrange it into its departments, for which each helper is severally responsible. The linking all their efforts together, in single correspondence with the centre of the Mission, must still rest with one Lady Superintendent.

In N—— Street, the poor people have themselves

come forward to “lend a hand,” as they say, “in visits to their neighbours, for the love of God.” One will call at a certain number of wretched houses after her little day-school closes. Another will nurse the sick, and comfort the distressed. Another will help the Bible-woman at the clothing-club. As months pass by, a ragged-school, a Sunday-school, and an evening adult class, have all sprung up from the nucleus of good in the little Mission-room. Then a friend who has it in his power offers, unasked, to pay the rent of two more rooms, to meet in, which have become an absolute necessity; for the best way to the heart of the parents is found to be through the children, as the way to that of the fathers is through the mothers.

And now says our friend, “It has pleased God to send us a Governess, who is remarkably fitted for her post, and who possesses the Missionary spirit necessary for a residence in such a neighbourhood. There are seventy-two children in our school-room, and it will contain no more. Alas! we are obliged to send many away.

“We have at present from thirty to forty adults in the evening class. We had no intention of opening such a school; but men and full-grown working-boys presented themselves entirely uninvited, and would not be refused instruction. They said if *we* would not teach them they would teach each other. Here evening teachers would be very welcome to assist our willing Governess.

“Our very kind friend, who has fought his country’s

battles in times past, is now nobly devoting four evenings every week to the instruction of our "roughs" in the "*peaceable* fruits of righteousness." We are again making arrangements for enlarging our rooms. We hope also to add a lending library, for the benefit of our scholars, who are already asking for books to read.

"Our meetings are now so crowded, we have not by any means sufficient room for those who attend. We have been obliged to remove the tables on Monday evening to accommodate our fifty mothers, who are able, by such an arrangement, to find seats. And the prayer-meetings on Sunday and Tuesday evenings are equally well attended.

"Last Sunday, one of the rough lads, who belongs to the evening-school, knocked at the door of the school-house, and asked the Governess to take him to the prayer-meeting at the Mission-house. She, of course, consented, and they were joined by eleven of the lad's companions, who conducted themselves with the utmost propriety.

"The men assemble (about twenty-six in number) on Sunday afternoons at a 'Bible-class' of their own, conducted by a lady. She has reason to believe that the respect which induced them, in the first instance, to accept her invitation, is growing already into a deeper feeling of anxiety for the salvation of their souls."

Who will not rejoice to see such work begun in such a street? The Bible and the clothing-club were the

first steps to it. Many a victim of dirt and untidiness is now the changed mother, whose influence, shed forth in her own home, has brought forth this fruit.

We leave it to be inferred whether the LADY, to whom they look to regulate all this new life, and by degrees to draft off the occupants of the Mission-room towards other channels of help and teaching, while again she seeks the outcasts—we leave it to be inferred whether she has not undertaken a “life-work;” and have we not continual testimony that she rejoices in it? “I am so absorbed in its interest,” she says, “that I think of little beyond it. I am glad of its excuse to be free from dinner-parties, and empty morning calls. I delight in having a work which obliges me to be near to God; and that makes a way of escape for me from the trifles of a conventional existence.”

This is a single sketch, which stands for others of a similar character, and gives an insight into the devotedness which God can call forth in the LADY’s heart, when she becomes attached to a Bible-woman, and sees the work that lies before her. Within half a mile of that very district (which we went to see for ourselves the other day) there are two more such ladies and their Bible-women, and a fourth has just begun to canvass, all effecting similar changes. Nameless and hidden such work may and ought to be; but it is all the more powerful. Surely it is true woman’s work. It attempts no publicity; it invades no right of others; it is work that, to a vast extent, has been hitherto left undone; and we hope that every day, in all directions,

more of the female members of Christ's universal Church will be awakened to do it, and to go forth, two and two, like the disciples of old, to the enterprise.

And now that the people are prepared of the Lord—that they are desiring to be taught God's Word—to be prayed for—to be cared for—family by family—shall it any longer be said, that there is a lack of LADIES to meet these wanderers, and bring them into the fold? Who can compass the idea of all we owe them for our long neglect? What clergyman, however loving and like his Master, can possibly be the spiritual shepherd of many *thousands* of these souls? Let us begin to care for them by tens and twenties. There are ladies who sit in their drawing-rooms martyrs to self-consideration—whose own happiness is frittered away by doubts and fears of a speculative kind—who would find their *faith* and *hope* greatly strengthened by the new exercise of their *love*, which the London streets now offer them, and who would, in undertaking the charge of a few dozen families, in connexion with a Bible-woman, enter upon a new and nobler existence.

“When, a year ago, I entered on this work,” says a friend in the East of London, “my ideas of it were very indefinite; but I felt that earnest prayer for wisdom and help would bring down from above the wisdom and grace I needed; and now I have to own that faith has not been exercised in vain.

"Our labour has been one of love ; and, though full of infirmity, God has prospered us far beyond our expectation. Difficulties and trials have beset us. We have encountered an almost brutish indifference to the future, both in this world and the next; a stolid stupidity, or self-satisfaction; often an absolute hatred of religion, accounted for by the great prevalence of drunken habits among the women, as well as the men. Nothing was more sad than the fighting and swearing amongst the children; while their wretched parents were quite enough to make the most courageous, fearful to contend with such a mass of sin.

"A considerable number of these degraded people, congregated together in Hackney Wick, kept each other in countenance; and, at first, if one of them attempted to alter her mode of life, or to attend a place of worship, she had to endure the petty persecution of jeers and taunts, with questions of 'how much she got by her canting and whining?'—which crushed more than one feeble effort to amend.

"Saturday night is their great drinking time. They return home late, after making their purchases, and, as a matter of course, stop at a public-house to spend 'the market-penny.' This too often leads to intoxication; and then quarrelling and fighting close the day, and leave black eyes to tell tales the following week.

"Every holiday-time, as it returns, whether Christmas, Easter, or Whitsuntide, is a season set apart for 'sprees.' They hoard up their earnings in anticipation of 'a good holiday,'—'their only holiday in the

year,' they say. And at these times they often drink till they are nearly mad. They lose all self-respect; and the misery that follows these revels is bitter beyond description. Clothes and furniture all go to the pawn-shop ; and it takes many weeks of regular work before they again recover their former position. A very melancholy consequence also is, that young children learn to look upon these days of licence as a warrant for them, in their small way, to follow the bad example of their elders.

"With all this mass of wickedness my good Bible-woman 'Susan' has daily contended for many months, and, by the blessing of God, with most happy results. Many a house is brighter and cleaner for her kindly-given hint, or from the judicious loan of a book. Many a hard-working woman, who had thought religion not meant for such as she, as she had no time for it, may now be seen, after her children are in bed, hastening to the City Missionary's Monday evening prayer-meeting, where she often finds 'a comfortable hour,' she tells us, to worship God. Sixteen of our women avail themselves of *this* opportunity, and it is a very important one in this district, for many of them cannot *as yet* leave their homes on Sunday evening, as their husbands say, 'If you go out, we will be off to the Chequers.' Not one of these women ever entered the house of God, or heard His name, except in oaths and curses, before this Woman's-Mission commenced.

"The 'mothers' meeting' is become a source of pleasure and comfort to both Superintendent and women,

from the spirit that pervades it. In the early days of its existence, they seemed to grudge the time spent in prayer as wasted ; now, the moment the hymn-books are handed round, every garment on which they are at work is laid aside ; and the energy with which they sing shews their personal feeling of the words. They always take a verse home with them from the portion of Scripture that follows, chosen for them by the Superintendent ; and this simple plan keeps the Word of God before them during the week. The verse is repeated by each member at the next meeting ; and the words thus impressed afford a happy topic of conversation.

"Already we have the happiness of seeing one poor degraded woman brought to the feet of Jesus as a penitent. When first we made her acquaintance she was a drinking, fighting, swearing creature. Tall and gaunt, her bad habits had given her an unusually forbidding appearance ; and, if we had singled out the most hardened and hopeless of the group that first gathered in the Mission-room, she would have been the one. Yet God has opened her heart, like Lydia's, to receive the truth, and it has set her free from the bondage of sin. She very soon cured herself and her children of swearing, is strictly moderate in her habits, and, instead of "sparring with" her husband on any provocation, she strives and prays against the uprisings of temper. Her gratitude is deep to the Superintendent, to 'Susan,' and to another lady who visited her ; and both she and her husband have written us most

gratifying letters. The truth found its way into her heart about three months ago.

"We think we can see several who attend the meetings wakening up into spiritual life. One bright handsome, high-spirited young mother shews, by her softened demeanour, that more serious thoughts are occupying her once vain and trifling mind. She wishes 'Susan' to see her oftener, and to talk and pray with her, as she does with Mrs S——. Formerly she used to leave us before prayer; but now she says, 'I cannot go till it is all over; and if my husband is in, he will wait a bit for me.' And then to many more the message comes in their deep poverty, and brings them to the feet of Jesus! One of our most degraded mothers, who had ten children, has been rescued from reckless despair by the kindly sympathy afforded her amid her sins and sorrows. She already proves that

'Religion's ways are pleasantness,
And all its paths are peace.'

"Now the husband is grateful as well as the wife. He says—'If it had not been for your Mission-room we should have gone from bad to worse, and I don't know what would have happened.'

"Yes! we can look upon many who give us hope. A regular attendance at God's house, drinking habits abandoned, swearing avoided, (though the habits of a past life make it a peculiarly difficult duty,) and the reading of the book of life, are all signs that a good work is not only begun, but progressing.

"Our Mission-room is in constant use. Two kind friends hold meetings for reading the Bible and prayer during the week, besides our own, which are well attended. We have two large classes weekly of such children as seem to be entirely neglected by their parents. We teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, geography—singing hymns, and prayer. Nearly all of them have been led to regular attendance on a Sunday-school; and the warmth with which their poor little hearts respond to the unaccustomed voice of love, make the hours spent with them amongst the happiest in the week."

The Lady who took the charge of "Ruth," the second St Giles's Bible-woman, on Mrs Thorold's lamented decease, gives us the following interesting details :—

A SECOND YEAR'S STORY OF ST GILES'S.

It is a solemn, and, in some respects, a painful exercise, to look back on work done for Christ, in which we have taken any part. Solemn; for how great is the privilege and the responsibility of being intrusted with the power. Painful, too, I do feel it· for how much more might have been done had I used, as I ought, all the opportunities He has given me.

We have just completed the second year of our Mission. In reviewing its course, a sense of wondering gratitude predominates. "It is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Our borders are enlarging. God had been so graciously with us in our mothers' meetings that I had learned to love the room in which they were held. But our numbers increased, and more than once, when asked for another chair for some late comer, "Ruth" said, "I have a chair, but I cannot find the space for it;" and the woman answered, "Oh, you'd have lots more, only we tells them there's no room; no more there ain't." At last I was obliged reluctantly to own that we must move our quarters.

And now I will try and tell you what God has done for us; but no one can fully enter into the blessed reality of our work who has not watched it from day to day, since first this little seed of good was dropped, with faith and prayer, into the low, weedy ground where our Mission labours are proceeding.

There are two tests of success which can be brought before our friends: one consists in the *numbers* availing themselves of the advantages offered at our Mission-room; the other in individual cases of reformation. Just glance at our three tea-parties. At the first tea (on the establishment of our Mission) we had seven guests; a year passed by, and in the same little room we met thirty-seven. Now, would you like to hear of our last tea-meeting, held this Easter?

During this year our district has been divided, and another flourishing Mission established on ground that was "Ruth's." And even our own large room will not hold all who wish to attend our work-meetings; so it became a serious question, which the women asked

pretty often, "What shall we do at our tea?" I knew that I had a very kind friend who would help in the emergency, so I did not feel uneasy; and one day, when our beloved rector paid us one of his welcome visits, we told him of what we had been speaking. He at once offered his new school-room for the occasion. So if you would peep at our third meeting, you must come into that really noble building, mount the wide stairs, and enter the girls' handsome school-room, now most elegantly decorated with flowers and banners. Here are collected between 240 and 250 of the lowest and most degraded of the ST GILES'S poor. Twenty-five ladies are serving tea, while many friends and Scripture-readers help to wait.

Everybody was pleased and grateful, not one symptom of discontent or other than really polite behaviour was observed, and yet some of our guests were not only the lowest, but the worst characters in London.

But you ask, and the question is very reasonable, "Do women in London wear coats and trousers? If not, how came thirty or forty men at a *mothers'* tea-party?" Thereby hangs a tale, which, as it is a pleasant one, I will relate. Soon after we moved into our present mission-room, I repeatedly heard that the husbands wished to have a meeting also, that they might hear for themselves what their wives mentioned as being read by their lady. For some time I took no notice, but at last told "Ruth" to go round and see what men desired this. With thankful surprise I heard that twenty-seven had expressed to her the wish. I re-

ported this to Mr Thorold, and after a little further inquiry, to ascertain the correctness of the report, he said he would begin a fathers' class, to be held every week in our mission-room. From the first they had been assured that there would be nothing but Bible reading and prayer, and no other inducement has been held out. Except a little fluctuation at one period, the numbers have been steadily maintained, and are now increasing. The men are deeply interested, and truly grateful ; while not a few Bibles have been, and are being, bought, as it is said, "for my husband to take to Mr Thorold's meeting." These men had been invited to accompany their wives on the present occasion, and are not the least interesting feature in the scene. Should we not thank God and take courage ?

Our work-meetings are most satisfactory. In October 1860, thirty was considered a good meeting ; but before Christmas we were so full that "Ruth" begged for a second weekly gathering. I fixed Monday evening, and resolved to make the secular business of purchasing clothing quite a subordinate affair. We give out *no* work at this meeting, nor is any done in the room. We commence by a hymn. A portion of Scripture is read and commented on, and we conclude with prayer. Before and after reading they may pay in their pence for clothing ; but I am extremely pleased to observe that at both our weekly meetings this is looked on as quite secondary to the reading. On Thursdays more than one hundred are present, but not more than forty or fifty have any monetary transactions, the rest come

to hear. On Monday from sixty to eighty sit to listen, but only twenty or thirty come to buy.

.With regard to the second test of success, viz., individual cases of improvement, I always feel reluctant to say much. Yet, as far as outward reformation is concerned, I can with thankful heart point to little children brought to baptism and to school, who were growing up as heathens. I can shew you those once among the worst women in this evil city, who now lead moral, quiet lives, are clean and decent in person and home and most diligent attendants on our cottage lectures. If this outward reformation be not *all* we desire, it is *not* a little thing. It generally means a great deal more. But I never encourage any talking of inward feelings by the women, I so very much dread manufactured experience.

Yet look at that woman. I never think of her without a sense of shame, for I knew not before how very much I could resemble Simon the Pharisee.

She joined our Mission eighteen months since. Her countenance, bloated and degraded, had on every feature the stamp of vice. I thought her breath polluted the atmosphere around. I shrank from contact with her, and longed to sanction the proposition made at that time, that she should be banished from our Mission-room as too hardened to get good, and so bad that others objected to sit with her. Thank God, I remembered that I was called to imitate Him who “receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” At first her attendance was most irregular, and for some months ceased. I

met her one day last October in the street, and asked, "Why have you not been at the Mission-room lately?" "I'll come now you're back, you'll see me next time." I did not believe her, for I saw that she had been drinking. She came, however. I think that day I told the story of the sinful woman who washed Christ's feet. Her attention was riveted. She has never missed but one meeting since, and that was through illness. Do you look round to recognise her? Ah, you will not know her from my description, though her countenance is not so changed as her life. But she is attractive rather than repulsive-looking now; and her attention is, as well as that of several others, positively exhausting to me. I never (till the last few weeks) have fancied it possible that the eager attention of the hearer could fatigue the speaker; but it is so with more than one of those poor women, and then the tears, silent and unheeded, will fall from their eyes as the love of Christ is spoken of! Oh, I cannot tell you how sure and real are the tokens which we have of a blessing. But *the day shall declare it.*

One woman, who was with us from the first, and was living in such bold and open sin, that I thought it would be unwise to visit her myself, was, about a year since, very much touched by the story of Hagar. In January she spoke of the good she had got in our Mission, adding, she had felt quite different since she began to come. As I knew there was little outward token of change, I fancied she only said what she did to please me, or from a momentary impression. On

that occasion she commenced paying for a new dress, and was very difficult to please, taking at last a much lighter cotton than we commended, and silencing my advice by saying, in a whisper, "Ah, but I want it for a very 'ticular 'casion ; you don't know nothing, but I'll tell some day." The dress was made and bought a few weeks since, and she came to "Ruth," some days after, to ask her "to get the bands called," as she and "her man" meant to marry ; she could not go on as she had, after all she had heard at the mothers' meetings.

Meantime, all those mentioned in former numbers are going on *most* satisfactorily. I have every reason to believe that *none* of those in whom I feel a peculiar interest have been led into drunkenness this Easter. I only wish you could have seen their looks of earnest, holy resolve, on the day before Good Friday, when, after telling of a Saviour's dying love, I begged them to remember that His eye would be on them, and His heart grieved did they fall into sin.

And now I want to ask all who read this to help this work. How ? By coming to look at us at our meetings ? Oh no ! *that* hinders, impedes, may injure our work. Without a *very* strong reason indeed, please do not visit us, but help us by prayer. If those who by sickness or other circumstances are prevented from much active service, would pray constantly for us in the heat and tumult of the conflict with evil, how very blessed would be the results. Plead for "Ruth," that she may be more and more fitted for her portion of the

work. Plead for "Ruth's" lady, that she may have the grace and skill, the humility and wisdom, which she so greatly needs. Ask that she may be made more fit for this so great vocation, or that another more suitable may take her place.

And now once again we turn westward to listen to a friend who says:—

"*April 1861.*—I have much pleasure in sending you, as I promised, a few particulars of the progress of the LISSON GROVE Mission. The present Bible-woman, JANE, has been in the work just twelve months. Like most other labourers in the same field, she has had mingled encouragements and disappointments.

"She has seen those who had, she hoped, abandoned their evil habits, and who seemed seriously striving, by God's help, to lead a different life, return to their old ways, deluded by former evil associates. Yet she has also been permitted to sing the song of thanksgiving, and exclaim, with regard to others, 'What hath God wrought!' The swearer has given up swearing, the drunkard has become sober, and the Sabbath-breaker is now to be seen sitting under the sound of the gospel, and seeking to bring others with him.

"Many of the homes, that within a year were scenes of wretchedness and dirt, are now cleaner, and comparatively comfortable. Our City Missionary witnesses that they are not like the same. The mothers, instead of repining at their lot, as they used to do, (and a hard lot it is with not a few,) now meet me with a smiling

face, and often say, ‘ Well, ma’am, I must not grumble, my husband has had three days’ work last week, and I expect he will have more this : ’ or, ‘ I am sure you will thank God with me that my husband went last night to the meeting, (a simple service conducted by the above Missionary in *our* room,) and he says he will go again ; I do feel *so* thankful : ’ or, ‘ God has been very good to me, He has sent me a friend indeed, (meaning Jane ;) things have been different with me since I knewed her.’

“ These, and similar expressions from these poor creatures, are no small cause for thankfulness, when we can look back a few months only, and remember the shudder we felt at the fearful oaths and vile language that then so frequently fell from the same lips.

“ With regard to the Bible work, the number of subscribers has decreased considerably, for Jane, at the present time, has only between twenty and thirty names in her collecting-book, and most of these are for large-print copies of the Scriptures ; but she continues to devote the principal part of three days a-week to the regular canvass of her district, calling upon the old subscribers and endeavouring to urge upon each the daily perusal of God’s Word, and herself reading to them when practicable.

“ The average attendance at our mothers’ meeting is forty-one, though we have nearly twice that number in our attendance-book. I believe these meetings have been made a temporal as well as spiritual blessing to many. I feel that one object of a mothers’ meeting

is to teach the poor women not only to make, but to *mend* their own and children's clothes ; and I always encourage them especially to bring their mending, undertaking, as an inducement, to find them in patches of every description and size, as well as cotton, tapes, and buttons as they may require. Some of the mothers have never attempted, indeed they did not before know how, to place a patch on an old garment. Jane now watches over this department, while I seek to benefit their souls by reading and talking to them. The attention and interest manifested is very encouraging, the fixed gaze and tearful eye often speaking more powerfully than words, though many are the expressions of grateful thanks also, from touched and softened hearts, as they tell Jane that 'words of truth and kindness have sent them home happier than they came,' and have further led them to search their Bibles 'to find the things they had heard about.'

"The interest manifested in the reading of God's Word and prayer shews itself very often by some of these poor women, who are out at work, coming into the meeting for *that alone*, and leaving at its conclusion, though they often remark, 'I wish I could stay it all, ma'am.' One who has to support herself and a family of eight children by flower selling (her husband from bodily infirmity earning but very little) told me 'the meeting was such a comfort to her, and had been so blessed to her soul's good, whenever she came, that she had made up her mind always to attend ;' and added, 'I have found, ma'am, I am not the loser but

the gainer by giving up an afternoon's sale, for my soul then gets something to feed upon for days after, and God helps me to provide for the bodies ; ' and then, besides, I get more work done the two hours I'm here than I can find time to do for the children, all the rest of the week.'

" Another remarked, ' Ah, ma'am ! I used to beat my children, and swear at them, before I came to this meeting, but I've learnt here how wicked I've been, and, God helping me, I'll do it no more.' This poor creature, we have every reason to believe, has given up both drinking and swearing, since she has been under ' Jane's ' visitation ; she told me a few weeks since, ' there was nothing she enjoyed so much *now*, as listening to the reading of God's Word, and singing His praise.'

" Jane has a meeting of mothers for prayer one evening a-week. This she has found a great help and refreshment to her own soul, and the mothers speak of it as '*the happy hour*.' One woman told me ' it was a blessed time, she never felt God so near to her as she did then.' I look upon these little gatherings for prayer, varying in number from ten to twenty-four persons, with the deepest interest. At their commencement there were only the ' two or three,' but our Saviour's promise has been verified here,—He has been in their midst, has added to their numbers, and has even been graciously pleased to make Himself known as the Redeemer of one of their souls.

" Early in December last, we commenced a Bible

reading weekly, for the fathers only ; this was a service that presented itself to my mind some time before I had courage to commence it, but that precious promise, ‘My God shall supply all your need out of the riches of His glory, by grace in Christ Jesus,’ came with such assurance to me, that I resolved in ‘His strength’ and ‘sufficiency’ to begin, and He, I would humbly acknowledge, has owned and blessed the effort in a striking degree.

“We made it a matter of earnest prayer at the mothers’ meeting, that God would incline the Sabbath breaker, the drunkard, and the swearer to come in on the evening named. One of those present told the City Missionary ‘he had never read his Bible, had spent his life in scoffing and swearing, and cared not at all if his wife and children did the same : but his wife had attended the mothers’ meeting for some months, and she urged his attendance on the men’s night ; and the first evening he went, he left the room resolved to lead a different life. He asked his wife to find the portion of Scripture which had been read and ‘talked about,’ and then said, ‘I shall pray to God to-night, that I may remember what I’ve heard.’ He has only been absent one evening since, and that was owing to indisposition ; and his wife told me, ‘she believed it was not more than three weeks from his first coming to the room, before he requested her to sell all their ginger-beer and lemonade bottles, and the stand that he had been in the practice of using on the Sunday for the sale of such drinks, “that all temptation might be put out

of the way, for, God helping him, he would spend the day very differently ; ” and now he and his wife go to the ‘house of God in company.’ Their children are sent to a Sunday-school, and morning and evening they bend the knee together at the family altar.

“ Truly, it is ‘not by might, nor by power, but by God’s Spirit’ alone, that such a change has been effected. I should also add, that the wife of this poor man informed me, her ‘husband generally made 10s. or 11s. by his sale of ginger-beer, &c., on the Sabbath-day ; ’ and as he is only in receipt of 10s. weekly by his daily work, which is road-scraping, and has four young children all dependent upon him, the sacrifice of the Sunday gains was not a small one. The simple but strong faith of this couple is most delightful to observe. They have been brought very low, sometimes rising in the morning without having bread for themselves or their children, or the means of procuring any, (and they will not now get into debt;) but our ‘Father knoweth that we have need of all these things before we ask Him,’ has proved a comforting assurance to them, and they have never found His faithfulness to fail. ‘Their bread has been given them,’ and ‘their water has been sure.’

“ Nor is this the only witness God has been graciously pleased to give us to the power of His word. I have a testimony from a wife of another man, who came with tears of thankful joy to tell me ‘she had reason to bless God that her husband ever came to the reading; for though, ma’am, he was a good husband and

father, as far as providing for us went, yet he used to swear so, and never cared for his own soul, or mine, or the children's, until he came to the Mission-room ; and last night, for the *first time* since we were married, he knelt down to pray. He never swears now ! and I hope soon he will pray with the children. He does so enjoy the reading, and says he would not miss coming on any account.'

"The wife of a third told me, that when her husband returned from the first meeting he had attended, he said, 'We have had such nice reading, I've liked it so much, and I feel now *I must* pray to God. 'One of the men prayed at the meeting; and if he can pray, why cannot *I*?' The wife told him 'he could, and she wished he would, and she would kneel down with him ;' but he said, 'I do not know what to say ;' she replied, 'God will give you words to say, if you go to Him and ask Him,'—'and he did, ma'am, and a beautiful prayer he made.' This man has been in the hospital for many weeks, during which time the visits of a kind Christian lady have been much blessed to him. He was afterwards sent to the Convalescent Institution, and said to his wife, 'When I return, God helping us, you shall read the Bible every day, and I will pray.' (The man cannot read, though I hope he will attend our adult class, and soon learn to do so.)

"I might mention several other cases of men who have been much impressed by the reading and simple exposition of God's Word, but I refrain from so doing, until by the life and conversation we should have good

ground for believing that the seed sown has taken root, and, watered by God's Holy Spirit, is bringing forth fruit to the praise and glory of His holy name, for 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' I would not omit to mention in connexion with this 'Fathers' Meeting,' that for the last four or five weeks I have been much helped in this meeting by a Christian friend, Captain M—, whose prayers and expositions of God's truth I believe to have been much blessed to some of the poor men, and his labours are gratefully acknowledged by all. I must, ere I close, mention one or two little incidents in connexion with 'Jane's' work, shewing how much her humble, though earnest and loving labours have been valued by her poor neighbours. A few weeks before our last Christmas tea-meeting, one of the women met me in the street, and asked me 'whether I should object to those who came to the Mothers' Meeting making Jane a present ; many of them wished to do it, and they thought it would be very nice to give her a book at the tea, when they all hoped to be present ;' adding, 'We love her much, very much more than you think, or can know of, ma'am ; we can never repay her, but God will.' I was very much pleased with this token of their gratitude ; the money was soon collected, and given to me for the purchase of the book,—('Light in the Dwelling,')—which was presented to Jane at the meeting, accompanied by many assurances of their love and thanks. Since then, the men have several of them asked what they could do for her. One man said he should like to clean the windows in the Mission-room,

and Jane's room also, which he does regularly every Saturday evening. Another thought her room wanted painting; if she would buy sixpenny worth of paint he would paint it for her, which he has done, and very nice he has made the room look. Then she has had presents of flowers, one man taking great pleasure in keeping the pots a bright red colour; and this last week I find she has had a shelf for the plants put up in each window, 'at the kind suggestion of one of our fathers,' as she told me; adding, in her simple and humble way of speaking, 'Really, ma'am, their kindness quite overcomes me; I am not worthy of it, but it is God's goodness to me. He inclines their hearts, and I would bless Him continually.' My prayer is, that both I and my Bible-woman may be kept humble, 'looking unto Jesus,' for of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, and to Him alone would we give all the praise.

E. S.

"*P.S.*—The City Missionaries in this locality have remarked that 'Lisson Grove at the present time, and Lisson Grove even only twelve months ago, is scarcely like the same place.' I may just add that one of these missionaries holds a little service in our room every Sunday and Thursday evening, and another has a Bible-class on the Sunday afternoon. Many have thus been brought under the sound of the gospel who never attended any public service before."

CHAPTER IX.

“*Gone Home.*”

“REJOICE IN IT.”

“I journey forth rejoicing,
From this dark vale of tears,
To heav’ly joy and freedom,
From earthly bonds and fears;
When Christ our Lord shall gather
All His redeem’d again,
His kingdom to inherit—
Good-night till then.

—*Hymns from the Land of Luther.*

“I would not *but* have pass’d those ‘depths,’
And such full communion known,
My Saviour, as is held with Thee
In the Border Land alone.”

DURING the process of collecting and arranging the facts hitherto presented to the reader in this little volume, the hand which groups them has been called to other service—in its inner and domestic circle. It is now three months since there passed away from the earth a young life, early vowed and given to these Missions. No one can sustain for years a periodical duty towards the public without being carried along the stream of responsibility, past many a spot where the heart would fain linger, sacred to private grief. “What *will* you do for the April ‘Book and its Missions?’” was one of the last inquiries, on her dying day, of a most beloved daughter, whom ere night we laid in the arms of Jesus, knowing that it was within His power, and His *only*, to teach us how to do without her.

A treasure, lent for eighteen years, has been reclaimed by the Lord of the way, who, when she seemed just ripening for earnest, helpful work in the Bible-missions on earth, has seen her ripe for heaven, and taken her to Himself.

Her final night of suffering was soothed by dreams of holding a Bible-reading with poor mothers; and among her last audible prayers, we caught the petition that “the dear Bible-women might be made holy, and

kept humble, and prize more and more their opportunities of working for their heavenly Master.”

Many were the soothing evidences of sympathy with this great loss which reached us from those engaged in the Mission—numerous meetings had been held, submissively to pray that this plant of sweet promise might be spared in the Lord’s vineyard below; yet after agonies of hope and fear, the Lord’s answer was only, that it should be swiftly transplanted to His garden above.

“Oh, if I recover, how I will seek to win souls for Christ!” was the constant outgoing of desire from that couch of bitter pain and holy patience. “Would that, in the days of miracle, our Lord could have said to you, ‘ARISE!’” was remarked to her; to which she answered, with a smile, (that all who once saw it longed to see again,) “No; rather let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

At one period of her illness her friends received the dire information, that, if they would preserve her life, a limb must needs be sacrificed. Her strength had, however, ebbed too far for them to make this painful choice, and it was not presented to her. She passed through a minor operation, with heroic fortitude, a week before her death, and said she had borne it through the help of a verse of Scripture, which a friend had sent her in a letter—Isa. xli. 10: “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I WILL STRENGTHEN THEE; yea, I will help thee.”

The “Silent Comforter,” a collection of daily texts arranged for invalids, and printed in large type for suspension at a distance from their eye, being before her the next day, open at the text, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,” &c., it was said to her, “The Lord has given you *these*.” “Yes,” she whispered, “and yesterday He gave me the next—‘long-suffering.’”

Shortly afterwards, she observed, “Perhaps this incision has spared my limb.” “Had you thought you might lose your limb?” was the reply. “No one told me so,” said she, “but I did think so, and I could have borne it to save life. Cripples may be very useful people. I should, perhaps, have cared for all the cripples in London. Oh, how much I have learned in this illness of what *sufferers* feel! When I get better, I shall think of it as quite a happy time. I had had no tribulation before, and it is written, ‘Through much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom.’”

“Quite a happy time!” and yet, in the view of the attendant surgeons, it was one of extraordinary suffering; abated *not* by opiates, but by the hours of “holy calm,” those “earnests of eternal rest” which a sympathising Saviour was pleased to give to this dear lamb of His fold, according to her need.

We sat by her side, ever to feel our faith strengthened by hearing her say, continually—

“My Jesus, as Thou wilt; oh, may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love I would my all resign.
Through sorrow or through joy, conduct me as Thine own,
And help me still to say, My Lord, Thy will be done!

“ My Jesus, as Thou wilt—all shall be well for me;
Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee.
Straight to my home above, I travel calmly on,
And sing in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done ! ”

These lines, and many others, are pencilled in “Hymns from the Land of Luther,” which were her constant companions. Very early led to lean on Jesus, and thus lovingly receiving His discipline in His finishing school of affliction, we scarcely marvelled that the enemy of souls was never permitted to harass her with a single doubt, and we never heard her murmur. How many a lesson from the Word she has left us ! “ ‘ Wait on the Lord ;’ *that*,” she said one day, “ implies that He must be *present* with *us*, for how can a servant wait on his master in his absence ? ” She loved to hear chapter after chapter from the book of Acts, and spoke of it as the best distraction from her pain, when other books were felt to be too exciting. She “ knew it all, but always wanted to hear it again.”

“ Perhaps you are like St Paul, in a strait betwixt two,” was said to her, “ desiring to depart and be with Christ ? ”

“ No,” she answered. “ If you talk to me of dying, you will make me wish to go ; but I am not in a strait ; I am ready for either, but I think I shall live to the glory of God.”

From the age of eleven she had desired to become visibly a member of the Church of Christ, and when delay was recommended, lest she might scarcely know her own mind at that age, she answered very humbly,

‘I feel that *I* love *Jesus*, and I am sure that Jesus loves me. Do you want any more?’

A most consistent and blameless walk and conversation thenceforth proved her a “living epistle,” known and read most by her *young* friends.

“The impression that ‘Edith’ made upon me,” says one of these, “was always of her earnest, steadfast aim and unswerving purpose to serve God with all her heart and mind and soul and strength. This seemed with her an ever-present thought. Each person she met was of interest to her: were they God’s children, she delighted to be with them; were they yet ‘afar off,’ her longing was that they might be ‘brought nigh.’”

This all-pervading feeling in her mind was ever evincing itself, and though there was so much about her to remind one that she was young and most child-like in spirit, her artless remarks shewed that she never forgot that each person she met had an undying soul. Did others talk of the faults and failings of their companions? She would ask that prayer might be made unto God for them. It was indeed good to be with her. You had no need to ask, was she a child of God? A very few moments’ conversation, and she was sure to give expression to some thought which one felt must come from a renewed heart.

Her exceeding delight in nature arose from her reading the book of God’s works in the light of His Word, and was enhanced by the remembrance that He who so clothed the grass of the field cared too for her.

“Life seemed, indeed, all bright before her; and with what joy she looked forward to a life of work for Christ! counting them worthy of double honour who had become fellow-labourers with God in His purposes of salvation.”

“He who accepts ‘purpose’ has said to that young and earnest spirit, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.’ So now being made perfect, she serves Him perfectly.”

Yes, in the last year of her course there was evidently a ripening and preparing of the soul—as many a silent memento now proves—for the fuller development of the heavenly state. She seldom slept without repeating the hymn—

“Father of eternal grace,
Glorify Thyself in me;
Meekly beaming in my face
May the world Thine image see.”

And this prayer was singularly answered, for not only one friend, but all who saw her witnessed to the peculiar influence of her smile. “I shall never forget my interview with your Edith at B——,” says a correspondent. “She was alone with me, and I sat for an hour, wondering at that bright young face, as she talked about heaven. She said she longed to spend and be spent in the service of her Redeemer upon earth; and I replied with Milton’s line—

‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’

And then she spoke of the rest that remains to the

people of God—freedom from sorrow, pain, and sin ; and her countenance really appeared as that of an angel, so lit up was it with spiritual beauty.

“On my return home, I felt how greatly I had been refreshed by that interview with, as it seemed to me, an almost beatified spirit. I knew nothing then of her malady, and she did not speak of it, but she seemed so ripe for heaven that my heart ached for her mother.”

“If I knew that I were to die in a fortnight (she said secretly to another friend) I should be glad to hear it, except for those I left behind.”

“And at last I am in the fold with the Shepherd,” was the voiceless utterance of that calm brow, as it lay ready for the grave, and tears could no longer flow for one so blessed. The 12th of March would have been her eighteenth birthday, and she had then greatly desired to receive the communion in her sick-chamber, with a few dear friends around her. Four days previously, however, she had been removed to the presence of her Lord himself ; but on the 13th, ere the mortal remains were carried to the tomb, many members of a wide family circle, and other friends, one in the faith and hope in which she died, were permitted to realise her intention, and to hold fellowship, which proved most soothing and delightful, as across the narrow stream of death, with Him who is “the Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

“I could hardly believe what I heard,” writes another comforter. “Edith looked about as unlikely a subject

for an early grave as any young friend of my acquaintance. Her temper appeared so serene, her temperament so cheerful, and her lease of life altogether so long a one ! Yet He in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways, had all along known otherwise ; and from the first loan of this dear child to you, had all along intended thus early to reclaim His own.

“ How blessed of Him to have hidden all this from you till the very moment when you *must* know it ! and how much more blessed to have written her name in the Lamb’s Book of Life, so long before He took her, that this new and undying relationship might have time to grow down into your hearts—that thus, in the moment of this most sad bereavement, you might feel yourselves only half-bereaved, in the sweet and restful consciousness, that, though become invisible to your mortal eyes, your child still lives, and will live eternally with God ! She never lived so truly and so blessedly as she lives now. 1 Sam. iii. 18, ‘ It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good,’ appears always to me a precious portion for a bereaved parent. So also Matt. xi. 26, ‘ Even so, Father : for so it seemed good in thy sight.’ This is enough to the heart of the Christian—‘ It seemed good to *my* Father.’ ”

“ Our American friend, H. W. Beecher, says, ‘ If I could have had my way, the bond of my household would not have been broken, but then there would have been no such familiar heaven to me as there is now ; the children that remain with us here, do not teach us to love children so much as those that go away from us to

the other world. The children that God brings up for us are more to us than those we bring up for ourselves.

“C. H.”

“You have relinquished at a gracious call,” says a kind earthly pastor, “one of your loved circle to swell the choir of heaven. Is it not a great honour and joy? You cannot lose sight of your dear child’s eternal gain. Nor is your bereavement altogether a *loss* to you. There is a fellowship with Christ which the soul gains through *such* suffering *alone*. Our blessed Lord knows the deep sorrow of a mother’s heart, and yet says, ‘Weep not.’ He still touches the bier on which our dead repose, and tells us that they live unto and with Him ; that they *never die*. ‘Rejoice’ over your happy recollections, and also in your brighter anticipations.* You will sometimes feel the dark shadows of death to be a great barrier between you and your child, but you must not forget that *her* Saviour will be always *your* Comforter. In your holy work she will yet be a companion ; in your songs of praise she will join ; in your communion she will share ; only her work will be more pure and perfect than yours, and her worship more unceasing and joyous. The Saviour ‘abolished death,’ and ‘brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ Surely this fixes an era of privilege which commenced for the saints of the New Testament dispensation above those of the Old.

* It was one night said to her, as she seemed drawing near her end, “We have been giving you up to the will of God, but we have found it *hard work*.” She only answered, “*Rejoice* in it.”

“Perhaps never before have these words seemed so precious to you, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Because I live, ye shall live also.’ If everything that endears the Saviour, and fixes our hearts in heaven, and deepens our perception of the preciousness of Holy Scripture, is a blessing, then you have felt it ‘good to be afflicted.’ It is in times like these we flee to ‘the God of all consolation.’”

“J. S.”

“Try to give Him praise,” says another exquisite letter of consolation, “for having taken her from the stormy wind and tempest—from the home of her earthly parents, to the rest of her Saviour’s side. Indeed, I am not counselling an effort which flesh and blood cannot attain. Rather I believe that in the interval between the departure of the spirit and the entombment of the body, there is such a fulness of the nearness and preciousness of the Lord’s presence manifested to the believer, that the calmness is not unnatural, the submission is not forced ; we do believe that to depart and be with Christ is far better. And what we believe for ourselves, we also believe for our holy dead.

“The *afterwards* we will not think of now, but indeed He is sufficient. Jesus Christ is more than husband, or wife, or child. We do not know the depths of His consolations, nor the tenderness of His love, nor the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, until we try Him.

“Oh that bright child ! how bright and fair she is

now in paradise. I was thinking of her only this morning, and recalling the sweet, mild, intelligent lineaments of that fair young face, which had the simplicity of youth, and yet something of the dignity of womanhood.

“She knows more now than all of us together, of what Christ is, and those who love Him. When you remember that each impatient thought is in *will* an attempt to bring her back again, you will ask to be content that she should stay in the presence of her Lord.

“May the Bible-work, and all belonging to it, have free course and prosper through your child’s life! May those who loved her be drawn nearer to that Divine-human Heart which mourns for you while it rejoices over her! May you, though now you go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, presently come again with joy, bringing your sheaves with you!

“A. W. T.”

“Home, home, home!” or a sound resembling it, was the last articulation that passed the precious lips of one now “gone home.” We love to think of our lost one, and as often as possible to retire from the absorbing “Life-work” of this our still joyful mission, to think what the message of so great a sorrow has been intended to teach us for the sake of that work.

Has it been sent in *judgment*, to put an end to all thoughts save those of personal grief? We trust not.

If it is said, “What do they know, who have not suffered?” we may add—suffered in a way to teach them the great LOVE of Christ to them, and the joy of having a Friend for life and death, in whose strength they can *bear all things*. If we ever felt this for a human friend, we were soon taught the weakness of the prop, and in some way it has slidden from under us; but if ever, having no strength of our own, we have looked for all unto Jesus, HE who “was bruised for our iniquities” has “carried our sorrows,” and while the world may wonder that they have not weighed us to the dust, we shall certainly know *by whom* those griefs were “borne.”

A great sorrow re-casts a soul: it either draws it nearer to the Friend whose intimacy must elevate it; or drives it into the far cold space of rebellion and despair. When the stripes of affliction are dealt to those whom God has called into His great school of work for souls, it is manifestly to give them new faculty in their calling. They needed to see deeper down into their own hearts, and thus into the hearts of others. Oh! how many a sorrow of the poor may we have striven to comfort, while their experiences have told them that we stood outside it! But the great leveller, Death, has admitted us now into an inner circle of fellowship with the human family “born unto trouble.” While he paints eye and cheek with his solemn purples; while he plucks away the fibres intertwined with our own being—whether of a loving infancy, childhood, youth, or age; and when we feel that all

the past has its fairest threads rent out of it through a present loss ; then by a succession of silent surprises do we learn what others felt, and how little we could before feel with them.

“ Perfect through suffering—is this the path
My Saviour trod ?
And shall I shrink to follow Thee,
Thou Lamb of God ? ”

“ Made like unto His brethren ” that He might know how to walk with His people through every “ burning fiery furnace ” of their human woes, truly He can also lift their hearts to rejoice in the fellowship of His sufferings—to pass under the rod, and rejoice in it.

To the children of light, whatever be their harrowing pangs, the strength to bear them comes with them—and no otherwise can be born fresh powers and forces of love and resignation. We knew not until now how it would be possible to follow that dear child’s prophetic monition, “ Rejoice in it,”—“ rejoicing in tribulation,” if tribulation be the will of God concerning us. Would aught save submission in the parents be an adequate result of their long sad study of the death-lesson, the life-lesson learned beside that bed ?

“ My Jesus, as Thou wilt.
Oh ! may Thy will be mine ! ”

Their beloved learned it ere they did. The young believer outstripped her elders ; and now that the word of the Lord is manifest and is “ done,” the cold stream forded, and for ever, and the prayer of the Saviour answered, “ Father, I will that this sufferer

be with me where I am,” a celestial convoy has guarded the spirit to the land that is “far better;” while the peaceful countenance fanned by their departing wings sank away from all traces of woe into its statue-like repose—first reflecting for an instant a gleam of that glory which broke on the death-strife from its eternity of joy beyond. And if to sympathise with sufferers, to prove the strength of Christ, and to rejoice in tribulation, “continuing instant in prayer,” are the appointed lessons for a day of trouble ; we also find that for the sake of the one “gone before,” we must aim to comfort fellow-mourners with the comfort wherewith we have been comforted of God—aim also to win souls to Christ’s work. For this alone is it worth while to gather ourselves up from sorrowing in that vacant room—over that empty chair. It is of none avail to suffer memory to dwell so painfully on those last exhaustions and convulsions, the ebbings and the faintings of mortality now “swallowed up of life.” So to those who have like ourselves received the message of a great sorrow, we turn especially in seeking for those softened hearts which will be meet for the requirements of our mission work and of these times.

Mothers—weeping for your children—and like Rachel of old refusing to be comforted because they are not! do you love to have memorials of them in every place that they inhabited? The human heart is very various in the demonstrations of its grief. To some the flower they planted, and the books they loved and marked, and many another token, awaken

ever and only a fresh passion of blinding tears ; while others, differently moulded, love to multiply at every turn, while their own life lasts, the hidden associations which shall speak to them of their departed. These are soothed by the grave, calm, angel statuette, with the white robe and the palm ;—by the clock that told the last hours to the dying eyes, ere time gave them up to eternity. The long, soft, treasured ringlet of their hair,—the similitude, though so far below what is remembered of the face transformed in the last weeks of its mortality, when the glory of the coming life was transfused into it,—even the daisy root from the turf that fringes their quiet grave,—we must have our still hours to muse over these. But they are only tokens to bid us go forward on our shortened way rejoicing—yes, “rejoicing.” Is that possible ? It is ; though the young, strong, sunshiny spirit has left our side—which we thought should have made our future fresh and bright as in the days of our youth. It was trained under the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and it is gone to bask for ever in Christ’s presence. We *can* rejoice that our loss adds another to that throng ; we can rejoice that we have work in hand for the Lord in which we find more joy than even aforetime ; Christ and His work *can* fill up the blank in the soul ; and now we understand as never we did before what it is to be “baptized into His death.”

Yes, let the Lord’s children rejoice in the baptism of suffering ; it is higher than the baptism of water, which is the appointed sign of entrance into the life

which is in Christ—“the cleansing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The Christian often waits long for his baptism by fire—the baptism which the Lord promised to the sons of Zebedee. “The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” If in what are commonly called works of usefulness, your labours concern the body alone, or the body first, it will be as wood, hay, and stubble, in the day of the Lord’s appearing—it will end at the arrival of that day. But if you have known the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, the fruit will be a longing after the *souls* of the poor, and care of their bodies *for their souls’ sakes*. In whatever measure we may have been called to know what it is to “crucify the flesh with its affections” for Christ’s sake;—at the foot of the cross we shall receive the message, “good tidings of great joy” to a perishing world. We have to carry this message,

“Take up the torch and wave it wide,”

and we can do so only as we have received it for ourselves. If we have proved His power to sustain us and our departed when we came together to the banks of Jordan,—

“If we felt Him near, when the feet
Were slipping over the brink,”

—then we must witness what Christ can be in such an hour—we must live to tell it to those who know Him not. How many names, mourning mothers! may be written by your means, by the side of a lost child, in the Lamb’s book of life!

The deep heart of woman has been compared to a mill-stone,—it must grind; and if it grinds upon

itself, or on some deep grief and stationary anguish—on the idea of some dear form, gone, missing, vanished ; and if the process of the parting is in thought repeated o'er and o'er again, the heart wears itself out with suffering ; and you may read this in many a face, which is its index. Might we hope that to a few such grieving hearts we may have delivered the message, “Rejoice in it !” Whatever the separation, it was THE LORD’S WILL ; and if you are the LORD’S CHILD, “rejoice in it.” Be *that* your motto now, till your lost one meets you at the gates of death, and ushers you to heaven.

Do we feel that a thick, dark veil is come down between us and those once our own ? Even so ; they are walking with their Redeemer on the other side ; but they are often very near to us. In Rev. vii. 14, we are told that those whose robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb, “*serve* God day and night in His temple.” We read elsewhere of “*ministering* spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” It is said in Heb. xii. 22, 23, that we are come to “the innumerable company of angels,” and also to “the spirits of the just made perfect.” *The latter* are, according to St Paul, Heb. xi. and xii., “the great cloud of witnesses” of that “race” which those still in the flesh are exhorted patiently to run.

Perhaps they wonder at nothing so much as our grief that they have attained the goal—

“ Young with the youth of angels, wise with the growth of years,
They marvel at our mortal weeks—the weeks we spend in tears.

For they have pass'd that space in heaven, those weeks without
a sin;

Their robes made white in Jesu's blood, all glorious within.

“And in such space, unto what height, their souls set free have
grown;

Loving, as they are loved by God; knowing, as they are known.

Yet, in that world, they're caring still, for those they loved in this.

The rich man did in torments, and shall not they in bliss?

For sitting at the Saviour's feet, and gazing in His face,

Surely they have not there unlearn'd one gentle human grace.”

Therefore when we enter daily into our closet, and shut our door on all human voices, they are possibly permitted to write for us, on the dark veil we spoke of, in characters of light, some comforting words of Holy Scripture that never so comforted us before. Yes, every day, if we look for it, some fresh promise will be gleaming out there, fulfilled in our experience. A fresh door is opened into heaven daily. It was open before, for we knew that Jesus had said, “I am the door,” but we scarcely realised it till that cherished one entered in.

Had they begun, or did they long to begin, some work for Christ on earth? Then is the thread of life not snapped—it has only passed through the veil; and if even the mourner left behind learns so much in her first month of sorrow concerning the unseen and invisible, what must be the unfolding and expanding of the spirit gone before?

True human loneliness is only found in living apart from God and His work. When those we love enter His presence, we go with them to the edge of their immortality, and on earth we set up their grave-stones,

almost every one of which has its answering inscription on some sorrowing human heart, cut deep into its surface by the Heavenly Sculptor. But the message of a great sorrow is not answered unless we set up other memorials of the loved and lost than grave-stones, and dedicate some LIFE-WORK for their sake—some work that will live beyond the tomb. It has been said that “the infinite ocean of human woes makes every idle moment in a Christian’s life guilt in the sight of God.” Suppose all the pious and sorrowful women in the world believed this, and were to look round for a field of their own in which they might win souls to Christ. Riches may have fled—home—even health—but this space for a labour of love remains.

Their great sorrow or loss may have clouded all the happiness of life as far as it depends on surrounding circumstances ; and if they had been nurtured in the Church of Rome, they might have turned to a convent for refuge from their grief. But a convent has its rules and occupations, and why should the care of the poor, of the young, of the sick, or the aged, belong only to Sisters of Charity in the Church of Rome ? The women of that Church have done more for her than her priests ; but has not the universal Church of Christ need of the work of women also ? and of women who can give their life to it?—not shut up within any four walls—not shut out from the refinements and refreshings of occasional change of scene and society. but shut in to a single and simple aim and purpose—to live for Christ, and to win souls to Him.

When this purpose is once formed in our hearts, around our feet lies woman's work, in some shape or other, and we need not go far to seek it; indeed, it will often speedily *come to us* in answer to fervent prayer.

The larger number of our Bible-women have, we feel, been sent us by God after His training in the school of affliction. We need fellow-workers with them from the same school and from the Upper Classes, who should be known as Bible-ladies, as distinctly as their forerunners. Their affectionate, and lucid, and simple teaching of the narratives and biographies of Scripture will be preferred by the poor to all other reading.

Let us seek first that “unction from the Holy One,” for ourselves, which shall anoint us to the work, and then those gifts of the Spirit which shall fit us for the
SERVICE OF THE WORD.

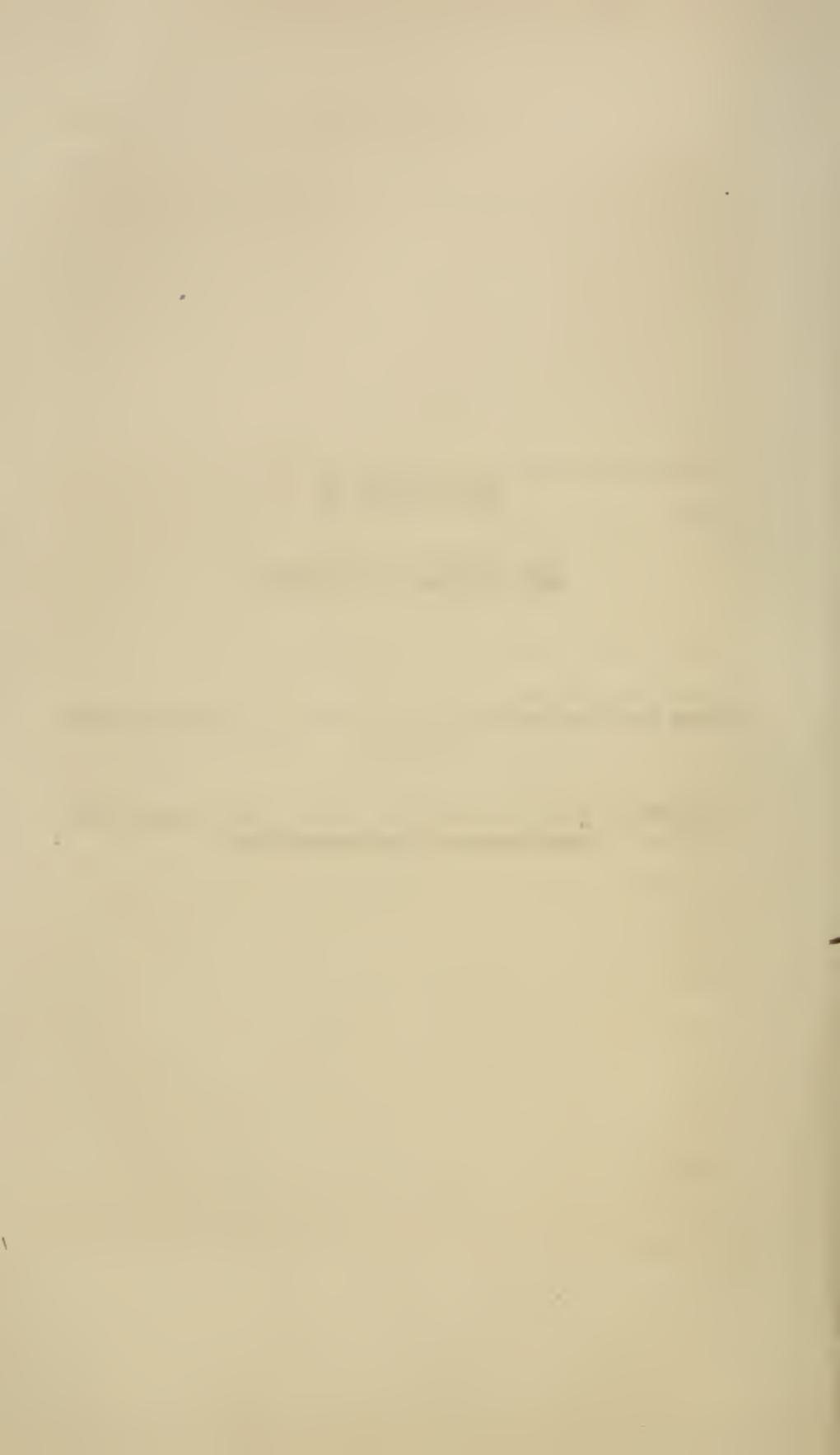
We want women well taught in the Scriptures, dear friends, young and old, coming forth from our happy Christian homes to shepherd the lost sheep of their own sex, who have stumbled on the dark mountains. They are blind with the mists of heathen ignorance, weary with the rough road of life, and they are now many of them thirsting for the living streams which your life of leisure has long suffered you to sit beside, and which have sprung up in your daily path within the fold. May God give you grace to minister to them this cup of cold, flowing water! Arise and minister it —how short may be your time to do so! What else is so much worth doing?

CHAPTER X.

The School of Mistakes.

“Look your disadvantages in the face, and see what can be made out of them.”

“Our failures are worked into the texture of the Eternal plans, which cannot fail and never falter.”



WE trust that it is with a feeling further removed than ever from gratulation to our personal selves, that those occupied in “Bible and Domestic Female Missions” present their store of four years’ fruits before the Lord in thanksgiving to His holy name. Not *their* fruits, His fruits. He sent them forth to sow the seed—His seed—the incorruptible seed of His Word—and in so doing has guided them to the happiness of following in HIS steps, for “He came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

In the Rector of St Giles’s annual address to his “Friends and Parishioners” for the present year 1861, he gives the following valuable testimony, which we quote because it serves us better than any summing up of our own results of labour. We only change the figures that relate to our work as now made up to the 20th May of the same year. Amid the note he takes of the other active and successful evangelising work conducted by his own parochial staff in St Giles’s, he adds :—

“ Of the Bible and Domestic Female Mission I seem always to have something to say. Unprecedented in

ourselves to tell them why "Marian's" reports are not now continued, and why St Giles's is identified with her name only in that first year. She began to visit in the summer of 1857, and in June 1858, as is mentioned in page 190 of the "Missing Link," had a severe illness, apparently caused by the poison of bad smells in a certain house in Dudley Street, which we soon afterwards, and at considerable expense, redeemed from its vile estate and turned into a GIRLS' DORMITORY.

In the autumn of 1858, some friends were conversing with Marian, in a BIBLE MISSION-ROOM in the house above named, on their designs for the poor Working Girls, whom they wished to rescue from their parents' over-crowded rooms.

The fittings of the house were just completed. Marian had never known before what it was to have a house to furnish ; she had never had more than one room ; and it is not easy to conceive the pleasure with which, conferring with her Lady, she had made cheap bargains for good and useful things, one after another. Every form and fender had its history ; every plate and every teapot ; how she promised herself to teach the girls to keep them clean ! The nice cocoa-nut-fibre mattresses to the twenty little iron bedsteads ; the flock beds, and the warm brown blankets ; the making of the linen ; and the care of each possession as it came in. She meant with her own eyes and hands "to see to everything." And our faith that she *would*, in that day of early experiment, we own, was scarcely shaken

by a misgiving if she *could*, in connexion with her Bible-mission. "Let her but once get settled," she said, "and all would go smoothly." She had left her sick husband at Ramsgate, under comfortable care, till she could tend him herself in her own "matron's room," and we were speculating how speedily she could be helped to this settlement, when suddenly we heard his voice upon the stairs.

He had always seemed, up to that period, a quiet, inoffensive, and much-to-be-pitied man, who would be active in getting his living if possible, but whose epileptic fits prevented that possibility. We knew that they had weakened his intellect; we had often visited him in his illnesses, and had heard him express himself very gratefully for the employment given to his good wife, and his own consequent freedom from care. We shall never forget our surprise when, at this juncture, he stumbled into the room, in a very free-and-easy way, and evidently in no pleasant temper.

To our ejaculation of surprise and displeasure at his making his appearance before he was sent for, he replied,—"A man had a right to come home to his own house, he supposed." This one speech, and the way in which it was uttered, opened our eyes at once to a long vista of vexation and trouble. We saw instantly the mistake we had made in supposing that Marian, as his wife, could be, as she had wished, the resident Matron of such a Dormitory. The rise in his relative position had crazed his brain, not strong before.

At that moment his folly was quelled by the determinate answer of,—“ Yes, Mr B., you would have a right if the house were your own, of course ; but this house is not yours, and you have no right to make yourself at home here in any room but one, which is not yet ready for you.”

Poor Marian perceived our dismay, and said, “ She was sure *she* could make him understand.” Alas, alas ! there followed, as we feared, many months of perpetual trouble to us, and of disappointment and bitter sorrow to her. Her husband never lost the idea that the house was his own, and that he was master in it ; and a very bad master he made.

It would have saved us, and saved her very much grief and shame on his account, if the decisive act of immediately removing them had followed on the first perception of how the matter stood. Another Matron ought to have been sought and found, and, in a little room of his own once more, he might have recovered his quiet mind. We could not bear to disappoint her thus. This house of refuge had been her great ambition, and in it she was suffered to prove her own weakness. She was afraid to increase our anxiety by telling us of any more misdemeanours than appeared upon the surface, and she concealed much of the passionate violence, as shewn towards herself, that would have warranted immediate removal.

Month after month passed away, and in this first Mission—once so prosperous—nothing now went right. The house was not well managed, and the Mission was

not well served ; for no one individual, even if unfettered by domestic care, could have compassed the two intentions. At last, there came a day in which admission was refused to the Superintendent by the insane "Master," so called ; and on the morrow, when his ejection had been resolved upon, he was found in agonies upon his bed, from which he never rose again ; and there, after ten weeks, he died.

Although every consideration had been shewn to them during sickness, he had been so uncontrollable, and, at his death, he left his wife in such debt and difficulty, that it was impossible the Mission should remain any longer in the same hands ; and, indeed, her own health, both of mind and body, had utterly failed under her trials ; and a quiet country life for her, with but little to do, appeared at once necessary. Such a position was offered her for a time by most kind friends in Suffolk, and her health seemed partially restored, but one of her eyes is entirely blind from gout in the head, and it appears as if she would lose the other if any further demand is made upon her physical or mental strength. She will never, therefore, be fit to return to London. The testimony of two medical friends indicates that she is precluded by infirmity from undertaking any matronship or mission with multifarious claims. She could not in any position be now depended upon, for fulfilment even of her own expressed desires. The firmness and strength of purpose which she shewed in the first outset of the work, to *raise* the poor rather than *relieve* them, is a

thing of the past with her. Too much of temporal help in the infancy of the Mission was left at her disposal and discretion as a poor woman ; and when a house taken for her in the midst of the desperate district gave her a *visible* power to relieve the poor, and, as they knew, in conjunction with a husband who was so totally unfit for it—he being alike despotic and unreasonable from brain disease—*she* was often threatened by the worst of their number in a way that would have ruined the Mission for ever in its birth-place of St Giles's, but for her providential removal by entire loss of health. While her first year's work is remembered, and it can never be forgotten, she cannot cease to be the charge of the Mission, and she is now under the care of kind friends at the seaside.

We here point out to others, for their benefit, the rather because it is already very widely known, the rock which might have wrecked our little vessel, and in so doing take to ourselves a full share of the blame for whatever was amiss. When we introduced the DORMITORY element into this first Mission, and supposed that one individual could possibly combine the offices of Matron and Missionary, it spoiled the first work, and was too much for the first worker. It was “Bypath Meadows” in our pilgrimage of social progress ; and when we hear of friends in the country expecting that the Bible-woman can be everything—be nurse to the village, cook, and sick-visitor besides—we reflect upon our own mistakes in this way, and recur to the old lesson of “doing one thing at a time.”

No one person can work night and day ; and a Bible-mission should always in all its particulars be under the careful *direction* and kind *regulation* of a considerate Superior in education and in station.

Because then we allowed poor "Marian" to undertake too much, and devolved more responsibility upon her, according to her own wish, than a poor woman was able to bear, (especially linked, as she was, to a companion in life who was not fitted to share it with her at all,) we have had to learn patience under disappointment. Had all gone well, we might, perhaps, have leaned upon an arm of flesh, and trusted in our own wisdom. The "link" is a true link, and it really *was* "missing;" but its value in the social chain depends upon its "rivet"—on its continued and full relation to BIBLE-WORK, (inclusive alike of the sale and reading of the Scriptures to the poor,) and on the maintenance, in the midst of necessary temporal objects, of the *primary* and *spiritual* aim of the Mission —the delivery of the MESSAGE FROM GOD, and helping the poor outcasts in various ways to accept it.

The overpowering welcome given to the offer of cheap Bedding, and to the Clothing-club, is not unlikely to create at first somewhat of confusion, as it did in St Giles's; and for a time the spiritual may seem to be swallowed up by the tide of success which attends the industrial ; but if alive to this danger, our friends will watch against it in all new Missions.

And yet the clothing and bedding clubs have certainly a work to do, *in connexion* with the Bible

Missions, in every wretched street and court ; for they lead to higher results than their own. They prepare the people for the worship of God, to which His Book must lead them.

The original club in Dudley Street did not decline under the new auspices which it became necessary to inaugurate after "Marian" left. It soon again made from £5 to £6 a-week, and is the field of labour of three or four earnest ladies, who have under their direction a well-trained "Naomi." There is, as of old, much pecuniary distress ; but *the people do not beg of those who carry on this Mission among them.* Any necessary relief comes from the LADIES, *not from the Bible-woman.* On the large space of ground which "Marian" traversed, in the first and only year of earnest labour permitted to her, there are now six Bible-women. Newport Market and Drury Lane have their own "Rachel" and "Miriam;" King Street, Chenies Street, and Parker Street have their "Ruth,"* "Drusilla," and "Amelia." In "Naomi's" mission, during the year 1860, 140 copies of the Scriptures were sold, and 1200 garments. In Ruth's, 146 copies, and 120 garments. In Chenies Street, (just commenc-

* We may remark, that it is still found convenient, as the Bible-women multiply, to give them a MISSION-NAME ; not from any notion of romantic interest, but from the undesirableness of publishing their actual names, and because it is found best that the Mission-name should belong to that especial locality, and remain attached to it, (except in the one case of "Marian,") even if the woman is for any cause dismissed. We have had singularly few defections, considering our rapid growth in numbers.

ing,) 6 copies, and 8 garments. In Newport Market, 96 copies, and 94 garments. In Parker Street, 62 copies, and 51 garments. In Drury Lane, 86 copies, and 382 garments. Total, 536 copies of Scripture, and 1855 articles of clothing or bedding, within the precincts of St Giles's :—all this not interfering with Mr Thorold's *own* parochial arrangements for a large clothing-club, and sale of bedding besides, and other congregational efforts of a similar character. In two of the above Mission-rooms Mr Thorold takes an especial and personal interest, as, indeed, he continues to do in the whole movement. No amount of united effort seems yet enough to meet the need of those changing thousands of poor. Our own knowledge of their having contributed for the purchase of Holy Scripture, during the year 1860, £38, 15s. 7d., and for the purchase of clothing and bedding, £248, 2s. 8d.—a total payment of £286, 18s. 3d. *to help themselves*—is a cheering proof of the expansion, and of the necessity for this under-work in its original birthplace.

The idea of a DORMITORY for Working Girls arose out of the first Bible Mission in St Giles's. It was supposed that if a quiet, cheerful home were provided for them in the centre of the district, they would gladly embrace the opportunity of escaping from their own over-crowded rooms. The experiment, for the first year or two was tried under difficulties, the CENTRAL

MISSION-ROOM, in which the Bible-women could meet for pastoral exhortation and encouragement, being necessarily *reserved* for that purpose in our first small Dormitory for twenty inmates, which rendered the undertaking less self-paying than it would have been, while the rule of excluding lodgers who were determined to sell on Sundays also limited considerably the number of girls.

It was likewise found to be not very easy to secure the right kind of Matron, on which the success of such an Institution mainly depends, as she must be equally kind and firm, and must of necessity be entrusted with much discretionary power. We have happily secured, during the last six months, a godly and sensible woman, who had had four years' previous experience in the Poplar Hospital, where her ward was always remarkable for its order and comfort.

She was recommended to us as a Bible-woman, and in order that she might take full and sympathising hold of the peculiar class with which she would have to deal, we gave her three months' experience of Bible-mission work in one of the most crowded City districts, and then gladly accepted her services as Dormitory Matron, at the same salary as Bible-woman—12s. 6d. a-week, besides lodging, fire, and light. She has from the first exercised the right kind of influence—a disciplinary, but an affectionate one—over the wandering, wilful, untaught girls, many of whose souls have been given to her.

The little Dudley Street house has now presented for

some time a picture of plain comfort and tidiness,—a quiet testimony in a street that needed it. Habits of private tippling are abolished, and the matron has gained, by her courage and kindness, the influential sympathy of several of the inmates, acting with hers for good over the remainder. It is incalculable what might be effected by the wise multiplication of these Girls' Dormitories in over-crowded districts. It is not only the blessing of a quiet night in a peaceable house that is gained, though that is much ; it is the motherly influence over them in their wild street life that gradually civilises them, and we hope, in many cases, will do still more.

The *double* nature of the work is as distinctive in the DORMITORY as in the MISSION, for the VISITING LADY is quite as necessary to every such house as the MATRON. On a specified day in every week, she receives the rent *nightly* collected by the Matron, and takes especial interest in the personal character of each inmate. It is eminently desirable that she should hold Bible-classes with them, and induce others to help her in this particular. The features of this work fill out, like those of the Domestic Mission, according to the time and love that are given to it. All, however, should still be provided on the plainest and simplest scale. The girls must not be spoiled for the rough life they necessarily lead, whether as costermongers or as poor sempstresses.

In the "School of Mistakes" concerning the general work of these Missions, we have studied the good old

lessons of "doing one thing at a time, and keeping the right thing first."

It has been no mistake to employ paid NATIVE AGENCY for missionary work among the poor women of London ; but it would have been a great mistake if it had not been minutely regulated and carefully superintended. It is a mistake to leave the purchase of clothing materials, the management of the accounts, the dispensation of relief, or the guidance of the Mothers' Class, except on rare occasions, in the hands of the Bible-woman. The Superintending Lady must do these things herself, or find occasional substitutes from her own position in life. Her superintendence *will* grow into a "Life-work," if the Mission prospers as it ought ; and its responsibility should be in one hand and be borne upon one heart, even if certain divided cares are undertaken by friends in departments. One Lady will promise, it may be, to visit the cases requiring aid ; one will purchase material ; another take the cutting-out ; and it is become very necessary that one Lady should consider herself Treasurer, and secure the funds requisite for the working of the Mission *locally* as far as possible, as a General fund will always be sufficiently absorbed in aiding weak and destitute districts and planting new missions.

Finally, it has been no mistake, as some of our friends feared it might be, to add to the delivery of THE MESSAGE FROM GOD, and to elementary spiritual teaching, the secularities of clothing for poor families by their own earnings and savings, and no mistake to

help them to earn it; but a great mistake to let the secular element so fill up the Bible-woman's time and thoughts as to divert her from the spiritual things which belong to HER MESSAGE, and from visiting and praying with the people as she delivers it. It is, moreover, a great mistake to let her take the clothing money at the homes of the poor. Her business is to bring them to the Lady at the Mission-room to make those deposits, and thus place themselves within the reach of help for their souls, as well as their bodies.

We feel it the more needful to be candid in a second report of the results of experience, because the agency represented in London by these humble BIBLE-WOMEN is now become, we find, but the accredited exponent of a far wider work of the same character, which is quietly arising in many provincial towns of England. The press has carried the details of experiments made in our metropolis to Ireland and Scotland, and even to other lands, where the same want had been felt of a "Missing Link" between evangelising work and those who were unreached at present by it; so that each efficiently conducted Bible and Domestic Mission in London has had its particular sphere of influence beyond its own circle.

Such circles may one day be world-wide. We are already asked to help to support one Bible-woman in SYRIA, and another in CAIRO; while we have in hand £256 ready for Mrs Mason's dispensation, when she returns with efficient and educated helpers, to send forth Female Bible Readers over the mountains of

Toungloo. Meanwhile, when as women we have cared for the heathendom at our own doors, and in our own villages, we shall feel the truer sympathy for that beyond seas.

It interests us exceedingly at the Central point to receive as we now do continual tidings of the rise and success of our Home RURAL or TOWN "Bible and Domestic Female Missions," which profess to follow our example, and also make a few mistakes of their own—by the way. We hope they may profit by our confessions, and are always glad when it seems possible for all parties to work together, and not to isolate these missions into the too distinctly parochial or congregational—on which delicate subject they will find a few hints in a further chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Girls' Homes and Woman's Work.

"For gin-shops and beer-shops, let us give them Dormitories and Kitchens."

"Work—work—work—
My labour never flags—
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread, and rags—
That shatter'd roof, and this naked floor,
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there."

"It is not only large Associations and wealthy Societies, with vast machinery, that have won great things for the Church of God. How much has been accomplished by means of solitary individuals, single minds and single hearts, bringing to bear upon others the power of that special gift with which God has endowed them for His service. Of these latter, also, it may be said, it is not so much by what they have themselves performed, as by the activity they have infused into other minds. Vaughan says of Schleirmacher, 'He did not so much desire to found a school as to stimulate individualities.'"

LARGE sums of money are often spent and charitable labour wasted in schemes which fail because they do not reach the class they were intended to benefit. The classes which the "Missing Link" work has hitherto aimed at, and tended to help to help themselves, have been chiefly the people of one room.

While one room remains their only possibility, there must be some sifting from this room, and egress from it at certain hours.

To sift out the young girls was the first purpose in instituting the experimental Dormitory mentioned in the last chapter. Before they can accept of its accommodation it must, however, come within their means to do so.

These girls either earn their living as servants in small places of all-work—as sellers of water-cresses, &c., in the streets—or as ill-paid sempstresses, flower-makers, &c. The pay of the first-rate workers of their grade is 7s. a-week; but the more general average 4s. or 5s., and their employment not constant.

In the most pathetic of poems, quoted as our motto, we had an undying picture drawn for us, which it is the design of such Dormitories to reverse. Our re-

searches have brought us acquainted with many such a lodging, at the rent of 3s. a-week ; and if the rent is to be honestly paid, the day's work must be often eked out by burning the candle far into the night, to keep body and soul together. No time for making or mending their own garments ; that must be done on Sunday —ere they can stretch their weary limbs for a walk even once in the week. Their general food is a small piece of meat, or a boiled egg, purchased as they go to their work—which, with the universal cup of tea, is their daily dietary. Is it to be wondered at that month after month of no comfort and no home drives them either to drink or to forget their misery—in the haunts of pleasure which lead to their ruin ? There are far lower depths also than these. The sister of "Poor Sarah," mentioned in our second chapter, makes four chemises of the usual size for 6d., and has to give $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. for thread. She receives this pay from a woman who has the work from some one else, and is bound down by that woman not to work at the Mothers' Meetings of our Bible Missions.

A young woman, who was in the Field Lane Refuge, when going to be paid for her work, received 2d. for making a smock frock which had taken her all day ; she left it, saying she could starve without such pay as well as with it.

Is it not time that effort became general to better the condition of our poor needle-slaves, and that it were made by women ? We had often perceived the necessity of supplying the inmates of our little home with sup-

plementary employment, to enable them to pay for their lodgings, but it had hitherto been impossible to arrange a work-room in our first house; we had also so many requests, that would not be refused, to give temporary shelter to the class of unfortunates who were always being rescued by the Bible-women and the City missionaries, that the removal of our other inmates to a new home had become imperative at the same moment that it also became possible.

The following is the history of a fresh endeavour in this direction:—

On the 5th of June 1861, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the crowded heart of old St Giles's, once in the fields, there were met in *two* recently erected and spacious rooms, because *one* would not contain them all, an assembly of 500 people, partly composed of BIBLE-WOMEN and their LADIES, with an addition of not a few clerical and other friends. More than 300 of the audience had a claim to be there as practically engaged in working out the principle described in the "Missing Link." The rest came by invitation, as the personal friends and supporters of individual Missions or of the work in general.

The meeting was primarily a *devotional* one, for each heart thirsted to express its grateful praise that it had been permitted to aid in this so great a work of the Lord. It was unique in its character, comprising all grades of society, from the daughters of England's noblest families, who graced the upper room, and her educated and honourable middle classes, to the poor

Bible-women in the lower one, many of whom had once known what it was to be starved in cellars and garrets, as sempstresses and saleswomen, but who had now been invited to labour, by the side of their more favoured sisters, in a high and glorious calling, the SERVICE OF GOD'S HOLY WORD—to sell it, to read it, to teach its first elements to the outcasts—to carry its “message from God” to those who had not been brought into Christ’s fold by former agencies for good—and to see all temporal benefits spring up in the train of the Mission.

No speakers had been invited to describe this Mission to that company, for all those assembled already well understood it. There was no room for human praise ; we believe there was not a true worker there, from the first to the most recently enlisted, who would not have felt hurt and humbled in being separated from the greatness of her object by any individual mention, the best experience of each having deeply taught her that it was the Lord’s work, not hers, and that if any glory were given, *save to Him*, His presence might depart.

Yet they were met for praise and prayer, thankful for this visible centre of a fresh phase of effort to seek and save the lost. The rejoicing of their hearts was expressed in the evergreen wreaths and floral decorations of their new Mission-room, and in their motto, formed in small box-leaves, and stellaria—

“HITHERTO THE LORD HATH HELPED US.”

"We track our Master's steps, and, if mid thorns we go,
Still sometimes here and there let a few roses blow."

And as the eye glanced over the general array, it was pleasant to think how these roses had sprung up in the wilderness.

Wilderness-like indeed was the locality when we entered on its possession. At a time when our increasing numbers and expanding relations to friends afar off absolutely required some spacious place of monthly meeting, it has been provided for us just as we needed it. Eighteen months since, a lady resident in the west of England wrote to offer us the use of a large old dilapidated shed, behind some small lodging-houses in Parker Street, Little Queen Street, if it could be of any service to the Mission. The first Ragged Schools began their existence in similar places. We did not see the way open then to any extra expenses or anxieties, and merely declined the offer at the time with thanks. A few months afterwards it was repeated, and we went to see the place. Originally, perhaps, a forge, and possibly in the midst of meadows, it had passed through its chapters of changeful London history, and had last contained an oven and machinery for fabricating the pies of doubtful origin that too often feed the poor. The day of inspection was gloomy and dingy, and the very bricks and old wood of the buildings in the small court-yard were rotting with filth and damp. All space is valuable in St Giles's, but this seemed totally unavailable without a large outlay of money; and when it is remembered how our Missions have arisen,

as it were, without hand, and without capital in reserve, supported only by what God sends to us one week to spend the next, it will not be wondered at that we gave answer once more, that the charge of the Missions was sufficient, without adding to them that of bricks and mortar.

Such was the wilderness !

Though we knew it not, the Lord had pointed out the spot, and He soon prepared the builder. A Christian friend, not long after this, called upon us to see the little Dormitory-house in Dudley Street, St Giles's, to the support of which he had largely and kindly contributed. In discussing the finances of that experimental Institution, the remark was made, that a house that could receive fifty would be rendered self-supporting, *if there were no first outlay in building.* He expressed the wish to see a Girls' Dormitory of such size provided, if possible, and a visit to the Dudley Street house, and to the old shed, confirmed his desire. He was going the next week to pay a visit to the place where the lady who made the offer resided, and a few weeks afterwards returned to London, with arrangements concluded, to make the ground his own for ninety years, inclusive of the small lodging-houses encircling the court-yard.

It was now agreed that if in this locality our kind friend was willing to erect a plain building suited to our purpose, our Mission should be under no money responsibility for the erection. We could only pay a moderate rent for our Mission-room, and engage to fill

the house and superintend it. The winter passed away, and step by step, as a really cheaper plan than altering and cleansing three little old houses, there has arisen a new and very convenient house, containing six good-sized sleeping-rooms, a matron's room, kitchen for the house occupants, Industrial Kitchen, and the large Workroom and Mission-room above it. These apartments surround, as we indicated, a small paved courtyard, to which, on the said 5th of June, after their hour of prayerful dedication of the Bible Mission-room above, Lord Shaftesbury and his friends descended, for a word with the assembled Bible-women in the workroom, who had *their* garlands and *their* speakers also, and then he declared the building open.

His Lordship knows so thoroughly his well-beloved St Giles's that he will not wonder at a word from without, heard by one of the returning company in passing up the dingy, narrow Parker Street. "Well, I heerd they was having a kick-up at the schools this arternoon. I 'spose the great uns is come down to amuse theirselves."

The satire is rather hard, St Giles's, upon your friends of St James's, and they must try not to deserve it ; but the poor *do* think so, dear friends, of all efforts to mend or change them, *short of* an earnest aim to bring their souls to Christ. They are very sharp-sighted, and they soon discern motives ; and if they think the "great uns" undertake to mend them or their habits, or their lodging, *merely for want of something to do* in their leisure moments, they scoff at the endeavour, and resolve to abide by their dirt.

The new house in Parker Street will, however, we trust, soon speak for itself, and silently prove to be a school of domestic example, closely connected with THE BOOK and its Mission to the Dens. How *that* has been accepted our readers are aware. A few statistics were read later in the evening, specially concerning the Dormitory feature of this Mission, which we will here quote for the sake of those who did not hear them.

"We may in this our new house fairly hope to carry out our earnest desire of civilising the young women of the poor operative and sempstress class, who will avail themselves of our teaching. As 2s. a-week is asked for rent from each inmate, the opportunity will be given to *earn at least 6d. on the premises towards it*, by scrubbing or by needle-work—chiefly the making of *bed-ticks*, which, when filled with flock, we shall sell to other Missions at the price of 7s. 6d. each. This will be self-paying, inclusive of their fabrication.

The influence of a BIBLE MISSION will still be preserved in this house by the Scripture Classes and Mothers' Meetings; and a large weekly Clothing-Club will hold its meetings in the room below, to which the inmates of the Dormitory will have access if they please.

They will be able to obtain clothing, and make it for themselves, as cheaply as possible, while we hope that an equally improving influence will be exercised by the INDUSTRIAL KITCHEN on their choice of food, and their mode of preparing it. Those who are engaged in work out of the house can order daily, as they pass the matron's window, the dinner for which they can pay, while from

twelve to one o'clock, dinners will be served out, under the superintendence of two Ladies, to the holders of tickets, to be supplied to the poor by subscribers, and distributed through the Bible-women, or Scripture-readers, or Missionaries. Two girls at a time, either from our Dormitory or from the neighbouring schools, will be able to earn rent and food for the week by giving assistance in this kitchen, where they will be taught both cooking and kitchen-work under a good cook, who undertakes the situation as a Christian woman, with this design of daily teaching. We look for the whole of the present undertaking to be self-paying, *if the house fills*; but we need help to provide 200 chairs and other furniture of the Mission-room.

The rule of not allowing our lodgers to make any sales on the Sunday will still be observed, though, to meet their difficulty in this particular, no rent is charged for Sunday night's lodging, and meals are provided for that day gratuitously.

THE RESCUE HOUSE.

We have *not* given up our first house in Dudley Street. During the two years and a-half we have occupied it, we hope much good has resulted to individuals, and now that, by forsaking our original Mission-room *there*, we leave space for ten more beds, thirty girls may be accommodated. We at first only intended to accept steady and virtuous girls as lodgers, but so many of *another* class have been brought to us

by Missionary friends, that the association of the two had become undesirable, and we, therefore, now intend to set our former premises apart for a RESCUE HOUSE, after a few alterations have been made in the premises.

The kind readers of THE BOOK AND ITS MISSIONS have sent us help for the Dudley Street Home during the two years and a half, or up to the present time, amounting to £499. Repairs and furnishing cost us £229, and we have paid

For rent and taxes	£135
Matron's salary and servant	125
Minor expenses, light, fire, and Sunday meals . .	109
<hr/>	
£369	
To this our lodgers contributed, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ years . .	126

Leaving £243 to be supplied, *as it has been*, by the donations of the benevolent. We have only £27 in hand. We hope friends will still keep this Rescue-house before their mind's eye, as *from the size of the house it cannot become quite self-paying*, and must still depend on those who interest themselves in that department of labour for about £100 a-year. Our charge for admission to this house is 1s. a-day, which includes food and washing, as well as lodging. Our rule is, that rent shall be paid daily by Missionaries or friends desirous to snatch those whom they bring there, from a life of sin, for the few days that may intervene between their rescue and placing them in a Refuge or Reformatory.

Our former chapter, entitled "Gone Home," speaks a word from the world of the past. For our holy dead all earthly opportunities of ministration are over; but many of us feel that they leave us a legacy of work, in that wide world of unsheltered girls and women, who must earn their bread by day and have no evening abiding-place which can be called a "home." Has not our loving Master a message for each of these? Shall not mothers and daughters with leisure, education, and wealth deliver it?

Blessed be every well-arranged Christian home for young women who are engaged in houses of business, and every cheerful set of Mission-rooms for their evening reception, where they shall refresh themselves from the toils of the day, and learn to connect the Bible and the Home. Their superiors must meet them in regular turns, to give tone to their reading, conversation, or self-teaching; but this will involve a sacrifice to each lady of her late dinner-hour, at least once in the week in which she may be appointed to visit. There are very different classes to be reached in the world of Operatives among women, as well as in the world of Outcasts. The Hon. Mrs Arthur Kinnaird, who has for years taken the deepest interest in the general subject of such Homes, tells us, "that the dressmaker in the large West End establishments is almost as far removed from the slop-worker as the landed proprietor is removed from the labourer whom he employs; but many thousands of these girls are isolated from their own homes and relatives—in order to minister to the wants

of the affluent—who *ought* to be brought under the influence of Christian teaching and sympathy *at some time*. They cannot, of course, be reached during their hours of business—the peculiarity of this work is that it can only be done at night and on the Sabbath. The long winter evenings, during what is called the dead season, are the harvest-time.” May God raise up labourers for this field also, who shall give “Life-work” to it! It needs its “Missing Links” of a superior class to the BIBLE-WOMEN, who shall watch for opportunities of connecting those who are willing to give voluntary help with those who need to be taught in different localities. And as this must be accomplished by paid agency, it will require support and sympathising inspection and direction. Some of the young shop-women must be instructed in the very elements of knowledge—in reading, writing, and arithmetic—many need teaching the use of their needle. Sanitary science might be made simple and attractive to them, and they are very ignorant of it. But as in our lower grade of Domestic Missions, all that bears upon the knowledge of the BIBLE should be the first aim of Voluntary Teachers. Geography and history can be caused to do this in the most profitable manner. The MESSAGE FROM GOD, and the *Mission-room* appear to be the first elements of this work, as well as our own. The union of paid and unpaid individual agency is quite as needful to one aim as it is to the other, and the general superintendence of such Home by one individual, who makes it a voluntary “Life-work,” and knits

up all the willing occasional effort that more occupied ladies might yet be willing to afford it. The influences for good that may go forth from centres like these are incalculable, for every girl who there becomes truly converted, will have impressed upon her the duty of becoming herself a free missionary to her companions.*

Four such institutions are already established in the metropolis, and possibly many more under individual superintendence, unknown to us. Oh, that LADIES might be brought to feel it a duty to follow out the individual histories of those who toil so many hours in hot work-rooms in their service—the larger part of them with unsaved souls—and whom none have taught the way to heaven! How many of these are lured daily over the line that bounds virtue from vice in an unwary moment, while their more favoured sisters do nothing to prevent their fall. Let us consider and build up the fences, make the safe path easier and pleasanter, and ask wisdom from Heaven to do it.

But to whichever class it is directed, we do think that the mark of true woman's work for God in Scripture and in life is its individuality. Her being, naturally tends towards the inner circle of the "home," and all

* Further particulars of these Homes and Mission-rooms in London may be obtained, by letter, from the Secretary of the CENTRAL UNITED ASSOCIATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN AND DOMESTIC IMPROVEMENT OF YOUNG WOMEN, 118 Pall Mall, S.W., or by a personal interview on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 2 till 5 P.M., at the same place. Post-Office Orders to be made payable to the Charing Cross Post-Office.

her education should fit her to make that home a nursery for heaven. When her energy ranges beyond it, it is well that it should make *other homes*, and shed around her the influence of the Book, that "law of the Lord," which rules by her own fireside. She is safe under the shadow of the Bible and the Home. She forsakes no quiet, womanly aim in dealing with individualities, and seeking to bring souls one by one to Christ. We are inclined to maintain very strongly that this individualism is woman's natural element. Man's voice, and nerve, and mould of intellectual power, fit him to deal with generalities and masses ; and if woman, as his helpmeet in the work of God, prepares his way in detail, she fulfils the office appointed to her. A man will almost always take the best general view of a subject, and a woman will work it out in its distinctive features. His theories must be proved in her practice.

Yes, we do earnestly believe that woman's work is individual—first in her inner circle ; that she will never do anything righteously except as she fulfils the duties of her own "inner circle ;" and yet, without forsaking that, for paths of publicity or self-glorification, there is work for every woman, *her own work*—CHRIST's WORK to be done beyond it. God has as many plans of life for women as there are women in the world ; and "If she have diligently followed every good work," in the apostle's injunctions to Timothy concerning widows, (1 Tim. v. 10,) implies the duty of every pious woman.

The vocation of each one will become evident to

herself, and afterwards to others, as soon as she obeys the command, "Take up the cross, and follow me." Mere imitators of *human* types often disgrace their originals, and disappoint themselves; but if the perfect model of JESUS is set before each of us, *that is so high* that the least approach to it elevates and sanctifies; and in Christ there is neither male nor female.

There is a marvellous though rare exception in Scripture to the ordinary course of God's revealed will for woman, which is that of subjection and silence, with regard to public ministration of His Word. When the people of Israel, in old time, were in an exceedingly oppressed condition and their land very desolate, when the highways lay desert, and travellers went by winding "bypaths, having been so often smitten and stripped that they stole from place to place by unfrequented routes;—in those days arose Deborah—"a mother in Israel." She dwelt under her palm-tree between Ramah and Bethel; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. It is the only instance recorded of such function exercised by a woman. She was a prophetess, and respect and honour seem to have been paid to her as one taught of God, and eminent for her sagacity and wisdom. She seems not only to have been endued with the power of foretelling future events, as is shewn by the assurance of victory she gave to Barak, but she was also gifted with that poetic inspiration which could record in mighty and undying song the triumphs of Israel when they obeyed the word of the

Lord ; and she was after all a help-meet to man, for Barak told her he could not go up on his perilous expedition without her. In our more modern times, the highways and byways of our great cities need their Deborahs —their “mothers in Israel”—and there is work unending for the “handmaids of the Lord,” on whom “He shall pour out in these days of his Spirit,” (Acts ii. 17.) We have apostolic recommendation that the elder women be “teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient unto their own husbands, *that the word of God be not blasphemed.*” They were to have, it certainly appears, a “Bible and Domestic Mission,” and it was most especially to be a mission to women.

The gift of utterance is bestowed on woman in various ways. Without deserting her own hearth-stone, if she has anything to say, and can write what will be read, she walks within her natural bounds of individual influence in that which she exerts over her readers one by one in their silent and thoughtful hours; but whatever her mission, we would beseech our Christian sisters, let it continue to be womanly.

Some few of our sex have the power of addressing and interesting numbers. And woman subjects herself to but little remark when, as woman *alone with women*, if her faculty permits, she speaks for God and Jesus even to hundreds at a time. We have heard her speak on such occasions so winningly, so touchingly, that we thought we had never before known how we

might be persuaded to accept the truth by invitation from mortal lips. Still there will always be a division of opinion on the propriety of such addresses; and we hope that women will leave to men, except in very peculiar circumstances, their proper faculty of public speech—of speech to a mixed audience. The design of this little volume is only to call forth workers for Christ among women who shall act on individuals one by one. The Mission here described affords such openings for quiet, silent work, which none can gainsay. Every Christian woman has some faculty, if she would find it out. She is fitted for some particular service, and she may learn what it is in trying to help one person at a time. It is only as she helps to fulfil God's purposes that her work will endure. And when we think for a moment on what God's great purposes must be, how instantaneously does it bring every human work, whether of man or woman, to its proper level, and shut out at once the pride and vanity of the creature.

The great purpose of Christ must be to educate souls for heaven : "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This He does one by one—bringing them singly each through their own furnace, to purge away the dross of self, and fix their eyes on Him. And, ah, how much of self there is in each to be burnt away ! Vanity is never the source of power in God's work, but self-dedication, and dedication to the SERVICE OF GOD'S HOLY WORD *is*; and it is to this that He seems to have attached in these last days a special blessing.

All the facts we have here tried to group lead to one certainty, viz., that God specially blesses the aim to deliver His own message—His written Word, to every human creature. Those who carry it to the most degraded will immediately perceive that their bodies must be cared for as well as their souls. Not by relief or gift—not even by giving them the Bible, but by lifting up their poor hands to take hold of the message for themselves, to buy the Holy Book, or, (if they have it lying dusty on the shelf,) by opening it and reading it to them—shewing them the history of a Saviour there.

The experience of every day now bids us lay firmer hold for ourselves on the conviction that BIBLE Missions are alone worth while. Nothing less and nothing lower. Social benefits will all take their right place in relation to this highest aim—*the delivery of the message from God*. The Bible re-forms the home. Mr Arthur has declared of India, “Send the Bible to every village, in the hand of some one who can read it—and wherever you do so, you send the teacher with it.” The Spirit of God follows the Word. We must pave the way, say some of our friends, by pressing the Temperance Pledge, and by enforcing Sanitary regulations. No, this is no longer a matter of question in those of our Missions where God is working with us most visibly. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The womanly sympathy of our agents, so new and so precious to the degraded among women, draws attention to the Divine message; then comes

invitation to the mothers' class, to listen to the illustrations of that message. The clean bright room calls by degrees for the clean dress, and a clean room like it at home—a clean bed and clean children. The money that went for drink is now all wanted. Besides,—the fresh air and water necessary to cleanliness diminish the desire for stimulants. *Temperance* has quietly stepped in, and *cleanliness* comes “*next to godliness*;” but godliness first.

A few more statistics about the Bible:—

10,533 copies were sold BY THE BIBLE-WOMEN last year, and in the two years previous about 7500. We are indebted to the kind aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society, according to our Ladies' reports, about £458 *for the present half-year*, so that our *whole* year's help from the Society will probably be under £1000—inclusive of the present or prospective multiplication of our districts; for, as the number of these multiplies, the sale of Bibles is likely to be less and less in each separately.

The last two or three years' BIBLE-work in London has gone far to annihilate what was called by the City Mission “the destitution of the Scriptures in the metropolis.” We speak not only of our own sales—which have been certainly upwards of 20,000 copies—but of those of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and of private booksellers, inclusive of sales by Colporteurs, Bible-collectors, District Visitors, and at the Bible Society's Depôts. It should now therefore, become with all Christians a personal Mis-

sion, to get the Bible *read* and *understood*, as well as *sold*. While the bag of Bibles to sell is still the most important mode of entrance for our Bible-women, they are quite as much fulfilling their Bible-mission in reading the Sacred Volume in short and striking portions, and praying with the people over what they read ; also in bringing them to the Mission-room, where the LADY'S place is perpetually becoming more defined—as making Bible-teaching her first duty—and in that receiving her greatest blessing.

The outcast poor have paid for Bibles to this Mission in the years 1857, '58, '59, '60, '61, the sum of £1706, 12s. 8d., which is therefore also the exact amount of the aid we have received during that period from the Committee of the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, who kindly give us the value of their Bibles towards the salary of our women.

It is surely a first trophy of victories to come that this *Domestic Female-mission* has induced poor mothers in London, who had never before subscribed to Clothing Clubs, *to pay in four years the astonishing sum of £5013, 7s. 6d. to purchase for themselves their own Dress and Beds*; being thus induced to save from beer-shops and gin-palaces more than a million and a-half of stray pence, which, they often tell us, have come back to them again as if by gift.

CHAPTER XII.

Working with Others.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also
on the things of others."

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

—PHIL. ii. 4, 5.

WE desire to attach considerable importance to the little word “WITH” in the heading of this chapter. To work *with* all who worked for God, has been from the first our earnest desire ; but our basis being very broad and our work lying very wide—always concerning the BIBLE and the HOME among the OUTCAST classes—and our support coming spontaneously from all Christians, it seemed imperative to keep it unfettered, and to preserve its first features of individualism and dualism. We have happened to hit on the right vein, in the heart of the capital of Christendom—HEATHEN IGNORANCE of the Word of God in the minds of poor mothers, which, when it came to light, everybody owned and seemed to have given up in despair ; for it appeared a fact concluded upon, that notwithstanding all the efforts of Churchmen and Nonconformists, and Societies including both parties, the major part of the lowest of our population, men and women, slipped through their fingers, and would not come to hear what they had to say. The census of 1851 proved this, and the nation sat down to the conviction ; but the mouse nibbled the lion’s net, and Christian, in Bunyan’s “ Pilgrim’s Pro-

gress," had in his bosom the key of promise that fitted the wards of the dungeon-gate of Giant Despair.

This mission took rise in 1857 from two thoughts that were suggested by a first walk through the Seven Dials :—1. Has the Bible found its way to these dark places in London ? 2. If it had, would they remain as we see them ? Resolve succeeded, to get the first question answered *through a poor woman*, who, living in the district, would feel no fear of the people. Previous experiments had been made with such a visitor, or rather with a partially paid agency not of the lowest class, in the courts of the High Street of Gravesend, and with some success, where it was said that ladies could not go. "Marian" was then sought, and found ; and her first year's good work, and its record, while leading on through the school of mistakes in a few particulars, proved an example to other localities, and resulted in subsequent experiences now too many to be doubted. The first six months had taught us that there was WOMAN'S WORK *for woman* undone, and crying out to be done, in every poor street. Didactic appeal about it would have been of little avail ; indeed we foresaw nothing of success or support in the labour —but just to tell what Marian found, in simple narrative form, and truthfully, was possible ; and that produced a repetition of the effort.

Our workers multiplied just as such narratives afforded the means, and our field appeared quite free for us. Of course, all former workers had their circles, but we had enough to do, and we have it to this mo-

ment, among those who tell us none have ever cared for them or brought them God's message before. Such at least is LONDON ; and listen to the Vicar of Islington, one of London's best-cared for suburbs :—

" You have asked me to put on paper my impressions of the result of the Bible-woman's labours in this parish. It might have been thought that there was no opening for such work here, where the poor were supposed to be so fully supplied with the Scriptures, having been visited, for many years, by Scripture-readers, City Missionaries, District Visitors, and Bible-collectors ; for we have, indeed, a staff of 300 visitors. The experience of the last year has, however, convinced me that there is abundant scope for the peculiar labours of the Bible-women, even in parishes where all other appliances exist, and are in active operation."

Good *men* dealt with the masses, and they longed for the masses to deal with ; we found we could go deeper down into the hearts of our own sex, and often hear them say to the Bible-woman, " We can tell *you* what we could not tell the missionary, or the lady, or the clergyman."

As the cultivation of this " native agency " among poor women has become popular, it has had its equivalent perils. Former workers, genuine ones, have been a little hurt at the universal acknowledgment of welcome to our often feeble and imperfect workers, and considered such preference unjust. They have each, naturally enough, stood for their own order.

To all of them we reply, and in Christian humility,

Brethren, our power is not in ourselves ; it is in the “sword of the Spirit” which we carry, and you have it also. We do not talk, we strike ; and God nerves our arm to strike home. Our work is, as you know, but a drop in the ocean. Be not afraid lest we leave you no waves to buffet and wrestle with. If a Bible-woman, in the strength of her message from God, has had entrance made for her by the King of kings into every room in every house in a street—ah, and into every corner of every room, as He pleased—she must needs bring sheep into all your folds. When the women hearken, the men will follow. The Bible must make the women, the women must make the homes, the homes make the men and the children. Multiply the “Missing Links,” therefore, and let them keep to their broad basis, and their wide and yet individual and unfettered work, and prepare to enlarge all your receptacles for a people that want to be taught. In your churches, in your chapels, and in *your* mission-rooms, you will have congregations whose thirst for the water of life will divest many a preacher of his mere phraseologies, and prompt him to clear and simple teaching of the way of salvation.

The lowest of the people do not come to places appointed for the worship of God,—first, because they are very dirty, and ashamed to shew themselves ; and, secondly, because they do not understand the A B C of what is talked about there. Therefore, we have begun to teach the women of those low streets the A B C of Christianity. Mrs Mason tells us of the

Toungoo women, “The reason Burmah is not converted is, because the women are not ; and the reason the women are not converted is, *because they do not understand.*”

“The teachers, as *men*,” she says, “have not had the time or the patience to sit down on a low seat and say one simple truth over and over, in varied ways. If you would have Burmah redeemed unto the Lord, *send woman to woman*, and let them teach the A B C of Christianity, which is mother’s work all the world over. ‘Moung Shway Moung is like Mount Meru, very high. He knows everything,’ say the women of Burmah, ‘*but he can’t talk woman-talk—we don’t understand.*’”

It surely is not supposed by our clergy or ministers, or by any of the great and good Societies which are most truly the glory of our country, that we, with our earnest and womanly individualism, whether in England or anywhere else, aim to supersede any good work already doing, or to interfere with men’s work at all. If it were, we can only say they are utterly mistaken—THEY “don’t understand.” Let them come down from “Mount Meru”—let them come down and see.

We wish they could be invisibly present at our Mothers’ Classes and Prayer-meetings, now gathered together all over London by weak women ; but it must be *invisibly*, for if we saw them there, we should cede our places to them, and then it would not be the same thing.

We have the witness in hundreds of hearts, ay, we

may even now say in thousands, that, besides teaching the women to cook and scour, and mend and make, and care for their babies, which is allowed to be our true vocation, there is above and beyond all this a true spiritual work for us as women, and it is awaiting us in every street, as Mrs Mason says, "to teach the A B C of Christianity." The Lord has prepared our way for it, and we are preparing the way of His servants—His ministers; and causing the people to long for further instruction.

Among the offshoots from Bible-missions there is nothing more interesting to a discerning Lady-Superintendent than the study of the different degrees of *faculty* evidenced by the members of the mothers' class. If she has the happiness of bringing them one after another to the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind, they are fit for something more than they formerly were. They enter—as truly as their superiors in station—as soon as they are converted from the error of their way, upon a life of worship and of work, and now that "the great change" is passing upon thousands of hitherto thoughtless hearts, we shall have a fresh reinforcement of the ranks of workers for God.

There is no natural gift in a poor woman more popular and welcome, even in the worst neighbourhoods, than the gift of nursing—such as it may be. "A neighbourly person," who is ready to lend a hand,

in sickness or accident, may be found in every street, and the roughest set of people always seek her services. We have been recently struck with the duty of looking out for these “nurses born,” and making use of them to a much greater extent in their own particular district, in connexion with the Bible-woman, whose time they may save, and spare for her more spiritual kind of work.

It is possible that some of these nursing-women might be worth what Miss Nightingale would call “training for their vocation ;” but what we specially desire for them is the training that a sensible and useful LADY, who made that *her* mission, could give them from the experience she has had in her own or her father’s house. We do not want them taken into an hospital to be trained, *i.e.*, not the major part of them, but left where they are found—in the streets we wish them to mend. Not taken out of their own families even, but still helping just in *the neighbourly way*, and only paid, in proportion, as they may be sent on errands of love and mercy that would absorb their time more entirely.

It is with dirt we first want them to grapple, and disease born of dirt. The Bible-woman begins this conflict ; but in proportion as she succeeds, the details of help overpower her, and she wants this follower—a matronly, kindly, tidy body—who will win the elder girl of a household to take a pride in the appearance of her little brothers, and of her hard-worked mother’s room ; who will be ever proving to the people the

medicinal powers of pure water and fresh air, of clean clothing and comfortable bedding, and putting them in the way to obtain them. There is some woman in every "mothers' class" who might be cultivated into this blessing to a neighbourhood, and she should be sought for, and proved, before any payment is offered to her. If she be a loving child of God, how many an opportunity may she have to drop the word in season, and to bring the sufferer to Christ ! This is not mere theory. We know a cheerful and respectable woman, who at forty-six years of age has been herself changed from a meagre, downcast, passionate, noisy wife, to what she now is in the Bible-woman's mission-room. The new calling of a nurse has actually given her health and strength. She took up the work that lay at her door, and, under direction, with sevenfold power. The Bible-woman of that district has always two or three messages before she begins her rounds every morning, begging that she will send the Mission-nurse—to whom many a case is referred that used to be sent to the hospital—and she often has the opportunity of ministering to the soul's need while soothing bodily pain. The poor are most happily occupied in helping each other towards self-help.

A Bible-woman's foundation work is sure to issue in division of labour. As the good seed of the kingdom springs up and brings forth fruit, workers of the under class at present alluded to will arise, and their right individual guides of the upper class also, as is obvious to those who are watching these Bible and Domestic Missions in different neighbourhoods, in every succeed-

ing week. We hope our friends will keep it in mind to look out for "nurses born," the women of the voice, and foot, and hand, that can yield comfort and repose in the sick room.

All honour, as we said before, to many good MEN who have been awake while we as women slept, or sat in our parlours, not seeing our duty to women and their homes. Thanks to them that they performed the duty we neglected, and did it in anywise. Let us now cast without delay our net of finer meshes, and employ our feminine persuasion and our natural power of influence in the quiet and loving SERVICE OF THE WORD. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." HE shall see HIS Word presently accomplishing the end "whereunto He sent it," made manifest as by "living epistles" in the changed men and women of the DENS. THEY will be the next "Missing Links."

But why do you not, we are often asked, place the Bible-woman under the control of the clergyman in whose parish she works?

We often practically meet his wish that this should be the case by leaving him to name the woman, if he knows of a suitable one among his own communicants, and are glad that he should present the LADY also if he wishes a Bible Mission appointed, and is able more or less to contribute to its support, and in such cases it will, in all probability, be insured that both of the workers shall be Church people. At the same time, we have frequently proved that there are members of the Church of England who will carry on this mission with so large a heart, that even when they find women who are Bap-

tists, Wesleyans, or Congregationalists working in their parish, provided they are the right women, "they will enter into their work, hail them as humble fellow-labourers, and often recommend for them helpful Superintendents. We ourselves are all the better pleased if these are pious Church ladies. We admire the union of denominations in Bible and Domestic Missions, and we constantly see such Bible women, though not Episcopalian, earnestly help the clergyman to fill his schools and his church.

The object of this mission is not sectional, and there is no occasion that it should be made so. It is to call the minds of the ignorant to the great Book which belongs to us all, and place them in a condition to listen to its message bodily and mentally, and after that to lead them with equal joy into either of the present earthly divisions of Christ's fold, only caring that it be Christ's. The day is dawning when there shall be but one fold and one Shepherd.

We have pleasure in referring to a *Home* at BARNET in the North London district, under the superintendence of the Rev. W. and Mrs Pennefather, for the *preliminary* training of pious persons desirous of labouring in fields of Christian usefulness at home and abroad. This institution is yet in its infancy. Eleven young women have been admitted hitherto. They are received into the Institution on the recommendation of two or three pious persons, who testify to their Christian character and heartfelt interest in the Lord's service; and enter *on trial*, in order that their health

and their aptitude for instruction (both in intellectual and practical subjects) may be tested. Young women of true piety, whether members of the Church of England or other orthodox churches, are eligible as candidates.

"We have at Barnet," says Mr Pennefather, "three Orphan Asylums, containing upwards of 300 children, entirely under one management. There is also a Refuge for Fallen Women ; a small Infirmary ; two Homes for destitute girls ; Boys' and Girls' Parochial Schools ; and Infant and Ragged Schools. These several Institutions afford an opportunity to our young women of acquiring knowledge in various departments of usefulness ; a thorough *industrial training* being one of our main objects.

"We have now secured an able Superintendent. One of our inmates has already been selected by a Missionary's wife to accompany her back to India ; another is looking to Syria as her sphere of labour ; a third is anxious to fit herself for nursing the sick in a foreign missionary station ; and we doubt not that, with God's blessing resting on the Institution, the needful funds will be supplied, and that important results will follow."

We have learned in our Bible-woman's work the real necessity of this preliminary training of pious persons for MATRONSHIP of Homes, Refuges, and other posts of trust needing special previous experience

From this home, Bible missionaries of another grade would go forth, like Pastor Fliedner's deaconesses.

In a letter from one of our dear friends,—who herself sought for training at the well-known and similar Protestant Establishment, which exists, on a far larger scale, at KAISERSWERTH, on the Rhine, and who is now beginning to give us most valuable help in our Parker Street and Dudley Street Homes,—the following passage occurs :—

"Kaiserswerth is certainly an Institution built on the true foundation ; and the simple faith and trust of teachers and taught is very beautiful. Many residents here are most uncommon characters ; and, as one watches the training of the novices, one feels that the true art of their education is understood. PASTOR FLIEDNER observed one day, 'Ten years ago, at Exeter Hall, when I spoke of my Deaconesses as Bible-women, clergymen were astonished ; and now there are such in London, with the very name ;' and, indeed, the sisters here *are* Bible-women.

"The Pastor has Branch Institutions in Pennsylvania, Alexandria, and Syria, and in many parts of the Continent. One opened at Florence, about six months since, is doing well.

"It is a great privilege to know the man to whom God has given such results from his twenty-five years' service. His motto is LOVE, and his aim, to make each one only the centre of a circle of usefulness—*so that each shall be not only herself a worker, but a trainer*

of many to take her place. This is his great aim, which, he says, is too much overlooked."

It appears to us that much advantage will be gained if training establishments for the pious women, who desire to be God's workers in the world, can be so constituted as to include the members of every orthodox spiritual community, and, of course, to permit them free access to their several pastors and churches when desired. Yet we can at the same time perceive that the work of the DEACONESS, to which a marked allusion is made by St Paul in his mention of Phœbe, was and must be definitely attached to an ecclesiastical centre.

Any allusion to the office of a Deaconess will probably call to mind an article in the *Quarterly Review* for October 1860, into which we know were compressed the thoughts and hopes of many years. A shorter pamphlet more recently put forth by that writer* gives full consideration to the subject of women's work in connexion with the Church of England.

The trained Deaconess of our day is much needed to be what she was of old, "the servant of the Church," a Parochial or Congregational Female Missionary, (for if one is instituted the other would follow,) under direction of the pastor or his helpers, appointed to divers works of usefulness in that particular communion—to concentrate her womanly care upon its sick and poor, its aged and lonely ones. We think *she* might be

* *The Help of Women in English Parishes.* Murray, Albemarle Street. Price 3d.

greatly aided by some Christian sister, her superior in station, with whom to confer and advise, in a somewhat similar position to our Lady-Superintendent.

It would require, of course, the exercise of Christian love when Parochial and Congregational deaconesses met on the same ground. The Scripture-reader and the City missionary do this, and very amicably ; while all true labourers have learned to do it in foreign missionary fields. Again, it would require that “the servants of the churches” should yet more consider themselves servants of Christ and His Word ; and great space they would still leave for the poor Bible-woman and her Lady in the realms of the sunken sixth, as they (the deaconesses) would not fulfil their office by visiting every family house by house ; and a perpetual friendly communication with these ever-needed pioneers must still be maintained,—hence the importance of our agency being kept unsectional.

To recur to the point we started with, viz.—“our working with others.” We have been urged by circumstances to form ourselves into a Body of co-workers in London, for mutual conference and help, and the avoidance of irregularities. Private missions have a tendency to die out with the removal of their first supporters ; or, perhaps, the industrial element gets uppermost ; or the woman is paid from free contributions to the Bible Society—which is a great misdemeanour in the view of that Society to us so friendly and helpful ; or having no time and place at which to render account, results are not summed up, or even observed, and mis-

takes therefore yield no fruit. "Union is strength" in many ways, and in none more than in social conference, whether as regards the Bible-women or their Ladies. Each one then learns that hers is not the only sphere, nor her plans the only successful ones. We can truly witness that our Ladies and women have taught one another as God has taught each of them, and with far less chatter and gossip than is said to mark women's work in general. Their occasional meetings have overcome prejudice, and increased Christian love. Little jealousies and egotisms belonging to "my church" and "your chapel" have died away in Christian fellowship in Christ's work and at the Lord's Table; and we have often had foretastes of the glory that shall follow.

We have hitherto thought it best to go silently forward, as God might lead us, merely entering in at the doors of usefulness which He opened — conferring chiefly with our co-workers; earning experience from our own mistakes; striving to give no just cause of offence; and reaping, as the Lord permitted us, a most abundant harvest, after a comparatively short sowing-time, which, indeed, has made it easy to take slight heed of opposition, and to trust to facts to live it down.

A little more general explanation of our aims and intentions is, perhaps, occasionally necessary to our friends who are members of LADIES' BIBLE ASSOCIATIONS, lest they think that if Bible-women are placed upon their districts, nothing further remains which voluntary agents need accomplish.

We think it well here to repeat our statement, that

our continuous aim has been to place these women where they are most wanted, guided somewhat by the help offered us for their support ; but never in any case, unless it can be proved that evangelising work and Bible-work want doing, and where the poor say “that nobody cares for *them*!”—districts in which, though the ordinances of religion may be carefully observed, still a link seems missing between them and large masses of those who care nothing about them.

To the depths that escape the notice, or are impenetrable to the *weekly* visit of other agencies—to these we have addressed ourselves by *daily* effort, and successfully, by the grace of God ; but we feel that, *after all*, the result is merely fractional, in comparison with the need of the labour ; and as to superseding any voluntary work among the decent classes, who were very largely reached by former organisations, we have no deeper wish than to increase the vitality and efficiency of all voluntary efforts.

We have constant proof that the right kind of Bible-woman is a true helper to the CITY MISSIONARY ; that she makes him fresh avenues to entrance, and that of a kind most suited to him in his influence over the *fathers* of those homes in which her daily visits comfort and reform the mothers, as he could not do. The help is mutual, and extremely important to both parties. There may be little hitches here and there with a few individuals ; but, on the whole, the City Missionaries and the Bible-women work well together, and it is fully admitted that there is room for both

of them, if their work is well adjusted, in the same district.

As to the District Visitor, or the Bible-collector, who feel their province invaded by the presence of the Bible-woman, we would only ask them each to come into pleasant and unsuspicuous relation to her, and see if she will not then also assist *them* in their particular departments. Our perpetual exhortation and request to the Ladies who take the charge of these women is to the following effect: Endeavour by your superior position clearly to ascertain what good work for the saving of souls is already going on in the neighbourhood. We have proved repeatedly, to our own full conviction, that there may have been good workers whose work has been very silent, yet earnest, in a locality where very little has seemed to be accomplished, and where undoubtedly a great deal remains to be done; and, possibly, these will feel aggrieved when fresh and successful accessories are found in their particular sphere. But time is too short, and death too busy, to indulge these personalities, which are, as yet, far more rife than they ought to be in the Church of Christ. They will be cast out in proportion as the Holy Spirit of God makes a temple of every one of our souls, and shews us that we must strive to work together for the sake of *our Lord's work*, and to think of it less as *our own*.

The labour of a Bible-woman can never supersede any previous effort of a true kind, or that has been undertaken in a right spirit, nor should it cause any relaxation of such effort. Her work is only supplemen-

tary, but the supplement was sadly wanting. Granted that she gains admission where the best of men and the kindest of ladies had hitherto made no way, and where they could have done little to prepare the way of the Lord if they had, with a dirty, thriftless, drunken woman. We do not say that higher agencies *never* touch such women, but at least, by their own admission, there are a vast number of these yet to be reclaimed. Are all such to wait till *we* ourselves can take hold of them? or are we to accept of every instrument, high and low, which our Master chooses to use?

There was an old lesson which even the loving John required to learn. When he saw one casting out devils in the name of Jesus, and said that he forbade him, "because he followeth not with us," the command of the Heavenly Teacher was, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us."

To recur to the work of a Lady Superintendent. In her engagement *to help* the Bible-woman is included, as far as possible, the smoothing of any difficulties which her humble sister may find in her path. As her work may become known by the practical good she does, and by the Bibles she sells in any given locality, and inquiries are made, sometimes with surprise and vexation, by the lady who may have called it *her* district, it will be well if the Bible-woman's Superintendent can communicate, if even but occasionally, with some one or more members of the Ladies' Bible Association of the neighbourhood. She will certainly be able to shew them that, in any given part of London

whatever, the woman's work done is almost infinitesimal, in proportion to that which she leaves for others.

Take any third-rate street. The class of small tradespeople there will very generally prefer the call of the Lady for the Penny Bible Subscription, *if she will call punctually*; so, indeed, will many of the decent poor; but there will be courts and alleys out of that very street, and not a few houses in it, of which the Lady knows nothing, save that she has called at the door, and been refused admittance. Often, only by a series of calls, and at varied times, does the Bible-woman find her way to a whole colony of human beings, and a world *beyond* that entrance-door. They send for no clergyman; they hide their dirt and hopelessness from respectable eyes; their Bibles, if they ever had them, are in pawn with their clothes; they keep no Sabbaths; they reverence no sanctuary. Who has found them out before? Possibly the City Missionary; but here they live, and they die. He may even have pointed many of their number to Jesus, but to how many more has he never gained access? —and what has he been able to do to mend their physical estate?

Such is the true field for the Bible-woman. Ere long she and her little black bag will find a welcome on every floor. The wonderful Book, to buy which they scrape their halfpence together, brings all blessings in its train—shews them what else they can do *for themselves*. All true reformation for the working classes must begin with themselves, whether for men or women,

and, we believe, *in their lowest grades*; for all true reformations have worked upwards. One room cleaned and tidied in this rookery will prove a mission-room to the rest. A LADY might have enforced order and cleanliness in vain; if she had penetrated hither, they would not have believed in her sanitary discourse; but now their haunts have been explored by the woman of their own degree (whom they are not ashamed to admit), the lady may follow and hold a mothers' class in one of the altered rooms. If she is a Bible-collector, her good taste and good-feeling would scarcely interfere with the poor woman's work in demesnes of this order; but even here the love of Christ can so open the heart, and also store the pocket, by implanting more provident habits—even here it is possible that the LADY might be invited (for such things have been) to take a penny *free* subscription to the Bible Society.

At many and many a humble door we are certain that sympathy would be evinced for the work of God throughout the world, after a Bible-woman and a mothers' class have been a few months at work in the very poorest neighbourhoods; and if ladies attached to the Bible Society would only set themselves to cultivate friendly intercourse with our lowly agents and their guides, they might clearly learn what channels of new Bible-work are opening every day, more than the fresh workers can ever undertake, whether in the selling or the reading of the Scriptures to the poor.

We must not omit to mention, likewise, the livelier sympathy that will be elicited in any neighbourhood

where a Bible and Domestic Female Mission is efficiently carried on. This will arise among the better classes of society, who may have hitherto been indifferent to reports of work in fields abroad, but can more easily be persuaded to "*look at home*," and see what is doing and has been done by the Bible in their own immediate vicinity.

We believe there is nothing so likely to prepare a broad and solid foundation for FREE CONTRIBUTIONS to the great national work of providing the Scriptures for the world, as this tangible "*beginning at home!*"

It will arrest the attention of thousands of persons who have never thought about it. The surprise to ourselves is that the imperfect work of a handful of women, as imperfectly recorded, should already have done this. It is more than could have been expected. It should lead to far more active exertion on the part of Ladies' Bible Committees. Have not the Bible-women pioneered their way for obtaining more vigorous help to the Bible Society, which, in 1859, at least, appears to have been afforded on a very limited scale—not more than £2059 in the year from the metropolis of England, including a population of three millions, equal to that of the whole of Scotland.

The Bible-women are not allowed to collect "free contributions." They are placed, in general, on districts which ladies are very glad to give up to them; and in most neighbourhoods the districts which LADIES *can* take are never long together fully supplied with collectors. Even in the exemplary and well-arranged

parish of ISLINGTON, with its 300 Visitors, one of the Bible Associations, as we are recently informed, has fifteen districts vacant. The Bible Associations in this locality have always worked kindly with the Bible-women, and can be taken as a specimen of how things *may* be conducted ; for “where there is a will there is a way.”

BUT IN SUCH A CITY AS LONDON THERE MAY BE VERY MUCH FOR BIBLE-WOMEN TO DO, EVEN AFTER LADIES MAY CONSIDER A DISTRICT TO BE FULLY SUPPLIED WITH THE SCRIPTURES, BY THEIR VOLUNTARY EXERTIONS.

In the borough of Southwark, it was, not long since, declared that a large Ladies’ Bible Committee had for two years been so actively engaged, that the lower agency was not at all wanted. The same thing was said of Westminster, where, also, a vigorous Ladies’ Committee had rendered excellent surface-supply, and in each case many hundreds of copies had been sold to poor subscribers ; nevertheless, it is equally true of both districts, that down, down, deeper down, lay strata of untouched humanity, to which the Bible-women are now daily finding access, and where they discover that when the Bible was supplied, and the Lady’s call had therefore ceased, there remained yet a world of work beyond, which, strange to say, has proved the need even of the supply of more Bibles.

We have often thought that our heavenly Guide has been pleased to elicit the good elements in this plan, and bring them out of one another hitherto, shewing

their united power in His own hand. The work of the Bible-woman immediately developed her need of an intimate helper from the LADY-class, whose co-operation must be vital in its spirituality. The Mission will not be persevered in or carried out, except by those who have the love of Jesus in their hearts. It has no power with the poor short of this. Merely assembling them in mothers' classes to work, or to talk to them about sanitary improvements, or the benefits of temperance, is not sufficient. It needs the Bible-woman to get them together, and the Lady's influence to keep them together, and so to teach them and prepare them for teaching, as to present her poor sisters to the Lord as her joy and crown of rejoicing. If her work spreads, she will necessarily seek the help of educated persons to take separate departments of the Mission.

She would be hindered by mere *nominal* help, but never by any that is vital and true. The Collectors for the Bible Society ought to be her earnest friends. The dry ground out of which sprang this little seed, which now shews spreading branches, was the discouragement experienced in attending Ladies' Bible Committees in London. No sooner formed than scattered ; the work disarranged by removal, by unpunctuality in the collectors, or absence ; their members, unwilling to seek subscriptions at larger houses, and unable to penetrate beyond ground-floors in lesser ones,—offered, week after week, such dispiriting contrast to flourishing country associations, and seemed so inadequate to the work that wanted doing, that we took refuge in the

experiment of paid female agency, superintended by voluntary effort, to supply the lack of service.

Are any of these decaying committees now aroused to complain that their work is taken from them? We must look upon it as a hopeful sign of life. *Their* work is to come out of this, and it must be *life-work*—no less! All those with whom it is already life-work can unite with us, and our help can be mutual. They can build upon our foundation, and we will joyfully aid them to do so.

Shut up in the comforts of our London homes, almost glorying in not knowing our next-door neighbours—accepting the declaration as true that we could not visit or trust the London poor—how thankful have some of us been to unlearn this wisdom, to find within a street of us a multitude of souls waiting for teaching, waiting for rescue, masses ever tending inwards from country towns, with weary hearts to which access could be found by the Bible-woman through the Word of God.

Oh, what a field for Ladies' work, especially for Bible-work, lies open now! Let them look in some afternoon at one of our Mission-rooms, and see the joy, the brightness, that attends the further raising of the fallen and degraded; and how truly it continues to be Bible-work, even amidst all accessories of physical amelioration. It will give them fresh heart and hope for the work in their own districts. We hope they will never again feel that the "Missing Link" is an intrusive agency. "Collision" with it ought to be an impossibility.

CHAPTER XIII.

Four Years' Fruits.

“ Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.”

“ Upon the stormy waters
The bread of life we cast,
With cheerful trust believing
It shall be found at last.
We see it but a moment,
Far drifting o'er the main,
But deathless, undecaying,
It shall be found again.

“ One eye shall ever watch it,
The eye of Him who sees
Each tiny seedling scatter'd
By summer's floating breeze;
The eye which sees the coral
As year by year it grows,
And counts the myriad crystals
Of the Himalayan snows.

“ Yes, on the stormy waters
We cast the bread of life;
Vain are the surging billows,
Vain is the tempest's strife.
His never-failing promise
Jehovah will fulfil,
And the seed be found in glory
When those proud waves are still.”

“**AND** do you really believe that those Bible-Missions are going on so well as is represented?” says a comparative stranger to our work, who is yet a general well-wisher to it. “I hear it is not all *couleur de rose* after all, but that there are a great many drawbacks and disappointments.” And so there truly are, dear friends; for what human work was ever without them? If you have chiefly thought of remarkable persons in it, you may be sure that God has worked by these in spite of their many failures and imperfections; and if glory was given to any one of them that belonged to HIMSELF, He has, according to His wont, laid that instrument aside, and taken up others in its stead.

There is no doubt that the record of the first year’s work of MARIAN in St Giles’s has served to spread the double agency of the Bible-woman and her Lady, in many a distant locality, as well as in other London districts. Other LADIES trained other women from those details, and funds spontaneously sent to the Editor of “The Book and its Missions” were without delay employed in multiplying such agencies. A further chapter will sum up the results of four years’ efforts, but first it seems right to the public and to

the rapid hold it has taken of the public sympathies, it almost stands by itself in the simplicity and unobtrusiveness of the method by which, under God, it has made its way. Barely four years have elapsed since the first Bible-woman entered Church Lane, but during that time upwards of twenty thousand Bibles have been sold to the poor of London by these women, whose number now exceeds a hundred and fifty. During this space of time, £1706 have been paid by the poor for those Bibles; £5013 have been contributed by them towards the purchase of clothing, beds, and blankets, and the public have given upwards of £13,000 towards the general purposes of the Mission.* We have now three Bible-women at work within our parochial limits, one stationed in Dudley Street, one in Short's Gardens, one in Store Street. I am anxious to see a fourth settled on the western confines of the parish in Crown Street, the very place of all others contemplated in the idea of the Mission."

"Before I leave the subject, I wish to make it quite clear at what precise objects it aims. In some points, no doubt, as could hardly be prevented, it works in parallel lines with existing agencies. In other points it holds ground never occupied before. Women before

* Donations received from June 1857, to Nov. 20, 1858,	£664	6	1
" ", Nov. 20, 1858, to Nov. 20, 1859,	1699	15	11
" ", Nov. 20, 1859, to Nov. 20, 1860,	6077	15	8
And for the present half year, Nov. 20, 1860, to			
May 20, 1861,	5288	9	0
	£13,730	6	8

now have done a most useful work in collecting pence for Bibles ; but they have been gentlewomen, not of the poor. The Clergy, Scripture Readers, City Missionaries, do their work of direct evangelisation by the Word of God and prayer. But as, in our own affairs, guided by an unerring instinct, we are apt to go to men for strength and to women for sympathy : so man's work in spiritual things is rather argumentative, authoritative, admonitory ; woman's, persuasive, suggestive, sisterly."

"In temporal matters the boundary line is yet more distinct. To cut out a frock, to mend a coat, to make a cup of broth, to boil a pudding, to tidy a room, to wash a shirt, to dress a baby, are not exactly the things in which men feel qualified to give advice, and by no means, as a matter of course, enter into the personal experience, even of the District Visitor. But here the Bible-woman is on her own ground ; she is able at once to win her way to confidence and gratitude by hastening to instruct the enormous ignorance of the poor in the commonest duties of life ; while, as she smooths the pillow of the sick mother, she can soothe the heart with words of Jesus Christ, and through tact and kindness prepare the way for the Gospel in trying to be a saviour of the body. The system is now spreading its network over the chief provincial towns ; with some modifications it will probably be introduced into villages ; and I ever see more reason not only for using it as an integral element in my own parochial system, but for considering it, even

with Ragged Schools and Refuges, as among the chief discoveries of the age."

The lapse of a year and a half since the publication of the little book entitled "THE MISSING LINK," announcing first experiments, has now tested the growth and permanence of the work, and evidenced, as we hope, the continued guidance and blessing of God upon it.

In an age abounding in benevolent efforts for the good of others, this mission still distinctively desires to base its MORAL and SANITARY reforms on a BIBLE foundation.

We shall not trouble our readers with many figures, but a few statistics are necessary for the use of those who have commenced the same work in districts beyond London. It may be as well to repeat the names of the FRIENDS IN COUNCIL, who from the time the missions began to expand in their third year, have kindly afforded their sanction and guidance to the growing work:—

COUNCIL OF FRIENDS FOR THE BIBLE MISSIONS.

President—The Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury.

Treasurer—The Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P.

MEMBERS.

The Rev. A. W. Thorold.
The Rev. W. Pennefather.
The Rev. Dr Hamilton.
The Rev. W. Arthur.
H. Hopley White, Esq.
W. Coles, Esq.

J. H. Fordham, Esq.
The Countess of Gainsborough.
The Countess Dowager of Ducie.
The Hon. Mrs Arthur Kin-
naird.
Mrs Pennefather.

Honorary Secretary—Mrs Ranyard.

These Friends, as was said in "The Missing Link," Chapter XXIII., have all a genuine and heart interest in this practical scheme. They from time to time meet and consult with some of the LADIES engaged in it. The accounts of money received are submitted to their cognisance and inspection, by the Honorary Secretary, who retains the general superintendence of the Mission, as having commenced it, but who consults their varied views in relation to every movement of importance. This arrangement verifies the business details in the public eye.

The accounts of thirty-seven districts, for the year 1859, occupied but two pages in the former little volume. Those interested in details which concern the year 1860 will find them given at length in the December *double* number of the "BOOK AND ITS MISSIONS" for that year. We shall here only present the abstract of Reports made to "Friends in Council" for the year 1860, and the *half* of the present year 1861, as certified by a professional auditor, who examines every book and voucher *at frequent and convenient intervals throughout the year*, on the principle that it is unwise to defer an audit till within a few days of presenting the balance-sheet to the public.

COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF RECEIPTS.

	1860.		One-half of 1861.
Donations to Special Dis-			
tricts - - - - -	£2843 17 5 ...		£2517 14 3
Donations to General Fund	3233 18 3 ...		2770 14 9
	<hr/> Carry forward, £6.77 15 8 ...		<hr/> £5288 9 0

1860.		One-half of 1861.
Brought forward.	£6077 15 8	... ... £5288 9 0
Payments of Poor for Bibles	749 18 7	... ... 458 14 1
Payments for Clothing,		
Bedding, &c.	2353 2 2	... ... 1918 6 8
Total	- - £9180 16 5	... ... £7665 9 9
The total Expenditure of the year being	8428 18 5	Expenditure - - 7523 6 6

Certified this day, 28th May 1861.—DAVID ALISON.

Those who order from their booksellers “The Book and its Missions,” price 3s. 3d. a-year, will remark on the cover of that cheap periodical (which gives the current monthly history of our Missions), that donations seem about equally divided between those sent to the General Fund and those intended for Special Districts.

In order that our subscribers may have a clear view of this subject, we give them for the present half-year a list in three divisions,—1, of the Districts supported by Special Donations; 2, of the Districts entirely supported by the General Fund; and, 3, of those which depend chiefly on the General Fund, but have some Local support, *which needs to be increased*. This division may aid those who wish to give us help in money, to select a Special District, and also shew that the GENERAL FUND must needs be continually supplied in order to meet its manifold existent claims, to pioneer in New Districts, and to assist in needy ones, as well as to support a moderate but indispensable Central expenditure.

DISTRICTS SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL DONATIONS.
HALF-YEAR'S ACCOUNT TO 20TH MAY 1861.

	Balance in Treasurer's hands, 20th Nov. 1860.	Donations.			Expenditure.			Balance in hand.			
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
E C											
Bishopsgate Street .....	.....	50	0	0	30	0	0	20	0	0
W.C.											
Parker Street .....	.....	24	2	0	17	0	0	7	2	0
Bagnigge Wells	12 1 1	28	1	6	15	0	0	25	2	7	
Bloomsbury	8 12 3	130	1	3	70	0	0	68	13	6	
Ship Yard	8 14 1	110	13	7	92	0	0	27	7	8	
Plough Court	13 5 7	55	7	7	25	0	0	43	13	2	
Covent Garden	10 0 0	30	0	0	30	0	0	10	0	0	
Drury Lane, No 2 .....	.....	30	0	0	.....			30	0	0
Brunswick Square	10 4 0	10	17	4	18	0	0	3	1	4	
N.											
Islington .....	.....	32	13	6	25	0	0	7	13	6
Hoxton	25 5 2	1	1	0	15	0	0	11	6	2	
Brill .....	.....	100	0	0	15	0	0	85	0	0
N.E.											
Dove Row	25 0 0	35	0	0	35	0	0	25	0	0	
Club Row	20 5 3	50	5	0	24	0	0	46	10	3	
Shoreditch .....	.....	20	0	0	11	10	0	8	10	0
Cambridge Heath	14 8 7	35	0	0	24	0	0	25	8	7	
Upper Clapton .....	.....	25	0	0	5	0	0	20	0	0
Rose Street	24 0 0	.....			24	0	0	.....		
Hackney Wick .....	.....	29	17	0	29	17	0	.....		
E.											
George Yard .....	.....	23	5	0	15	0	0	8	5	0
S.E.											
Snow's Fields .....	.....	21	5	0	15	0	0	6	5	0
Maze Pond .....	.....	25	0	0	5	0	0	20	0	0
London Road	40 0 0	.....			25	0	0	15	0	0
East Greenwich .....	.....	10	0	0	10	0	0	.....		
S.											
New Cut	36 9 1	17	18	0	33	3	0	21	4	1	
Upper Norwood .....	.....	28	3	0	25	0	0	3	3	0
S.W.											
Sloane Street	18 11 0	23	4	0	40	11	0	1	4	0	
Tothill Street .....	.....	45	0	0	45	0	0	.....		
Haymarket .....	.....	10	0	0	.....			10	0	0
Upper Chelsea .....	.....	89	3	1	89	3	1	.....		
W.											
Grosvenor Square .....	.....	66	6	0	60	0	0	6	6	0
Catudene Hill	8 11 2	45	10	0	35	0	0	19	1	2	
Gray's Buildings	21 0 0	61	0	0	30	0	0	52	0	0	
Marylebone Court .....	.....	45	5	0	30	0	0	15	5	0
Brentford	20 0 0	36	16	0	55	15	0	1	1	0	
Mayfair .....	.....	25	0	0	.....			25	0	0
Paddington .....	.....	169	7	8	169	7	8	.....		
Berwick Street .....	.....	20	0	0	20	0	0	.....		
N.W.											
Lisson Grove .....	.....	101	2	0	65	0	0	36	2	
Nightingale Street .....	.....	62	11	6	62	11	6	.....		
		316	7	3	1723	16	0	1335	18	3	
									704	5	0

DISTRICTS ENTIRELY SUPPORTED FROM GENERAL FUND.

	EXPENDITURE.		EXPENDITURE.
Cow Cross	£20 0 0	Brought forward,	£306 10 0
Tower Hill	24 0 0	London Hospital . . .	15 0 0
Amwell Street	25 0 0	Isle of Dogs	25 0 0
		S.E.	
		Lant Street	35 0 0
Red Lion Square	5 0 0	Union Street	14 0 0
		Friar Street	13 0 0
Haggerstone	35 0 0	Falstaff Yard	8 0 0
Green Street	31 10 0	Peckham	5 0 0
Hoxton Old Town	16 10 0	Bermondsey Wall	24 10 0
Coventry Street	19 0 0	S.	
King Edward Street	26 10 0	Wat-rloo Road	10 0 0
Stonebridge	23 0 0	St George's Road	15 0 0
Pelham Street	25 0 0	S.W.	
		Millbank	22 0 0
Whitechapel	19 0 0	N.W.	
Wapping	14 0 0	Cumberland Market	19 10 0
St George's East	23 0 0	Bedford New Town	20 0 0
Carried forward,	<u>£306 10 0</u>		<u>£532 10 0</u>

The above are therefore especially open to help, as well as the following:—

DISTRICTS PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL DONATIONS,
AND NEEDING FURTHER HELP.

HALF-YEAR'S ACCOUNT TO 20TH MAY 1861.

E.C.	Donations.	Help from General Fund.	Expenditure.	Each of these lines will probably be picked out by some one who has reason to feel a personal interest in the district re- ferred to, and we hope all will ask themselves if they can give money, thought, time, or prayer, to aid the			
				£	s.	d.	£
Holborn	3 5 0	14 15 0	18 0 0				
Clerkenwell	2 5 0	23 15 0	26 0 0				
Exmouth Street ...	5 10 0	37 10 0	43 0 0				
Moor Lane	4 5 6	10 14 6	15 0 0				
Goswell Street	12 0 0	16 0 0	23 0 0				
Whitecross Street...	0 10 0	30 10 0	31 0 0				
Long Alley	9 5 6	9 10 0	18 15 6				
Old St., St Luke's...	2 0 0	17 0 0	19 0 0				
Hatton Garden	2 4 6	13 15 6	16 0 0				
York Road	9 3 0	13 17 0	23 0 0				
Verulam Street	12 2 6	5 7 6	17 10 0				
W.C.							
St Giles's, No. 1 } ...	90 18 6	34 1 6	125 0 0				
Do., No. 2 } ...							
Chenies Street	21 5 0	53 15 0	75 0 0				
Newport Market ...	4 19 6	32 0 6	37 0 0				
Carried forward,	179 14 0	312 11 6	492 5 6				

DISTRICTS PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL DONATIONS, &c.—*Continued.*

	Donations.	Help from General Fund.	Expenditure.		
			£	s.	d.
Brought forward,					
Gray's Inn Lane ...	179 14 0	312 11 6	492	5	6
0 13 0	4 7 0	5 0 0			
Cromer Street	9 6 0	22 14 0	32	0	0
Gordon Square	33 8 6	16 15 0	50	3	6
Malf.-rd Lane	11 8 6	12 11 6	24	0	0
Drury Lane.....	11 11 6	33 8 6	45	0	0
N.					
Holloway, Lower...	1 10 6	18 9 6	15	0	0
Do Upper	9 3 6	24 16 6	34	0	0
Lower Hoxton	1 12 6	12 17 0	14	9	6
King's Cross	1 10 0	22 10 0	24	0	0
Hadley, Barnet.....	20 0 0	20 0 0	40	0	0
N.E.					
Bethnal Gr., No. 1 }	6 14 0	53 6 0	60	0	0
Do., No. 2 }	0 3 4	22 6 8	22	10	0
Turville Street	2 12 6	42 7 6	45	0	0
Victoria Park.....	4 10 0	10 19 0	15	0	0
Spitalfields	0 10 6	19 9 6	20	0	0
Hackney	0 1 6	15 18 6	16	0	0
Waterloo Town	0 10 0	18 10 0	19	0	0
Kingsland					
E.					
Algate	0 5 0	4 15 0	15	0	0
Petticoat Lane	16 12 6	0 7 6	17	0	0
Ratcliffe	27 0 0	8 0 0	35	0	0
Central Stepney ...	3 7 0	11 13 0	15	0	0
Lower Stepney	10 0 0	16 0 0	26	0	0
Shadwell	10 0 0	25 0 0	35	0	0
Limehouse	2 17 6	12 2 6	15	0	0
Mile End.....	1 5 0	17 15 0	19	0	0
Poplar	12 12 4	5 0 0	17	12	4
Blackwall	5 0 0	2 0 0	7	0	0
Viet Docks, No. 1 }	11 40 0	36 10 0	48	0	0
Do., No. 2 }	6 3 6	34 16 6	40	0	0
Limehouse Fields...	5 0 0	10 0 0	15	0	0
Bow Common	3 18 3	21 6 9	25	0	0
S.E.					
Bermondsey	2 0 0	24 10 0	26	10	0
Kent Street	8 4 1	37 15 1	46	0	0
Horsleydown.....	4 15 0	15 5 0	20	0	0
S.					
Wyndham Road ...	19 18 6	8 1 6	28	0	0
Walworth	0 5 9	9 15 0	10	0	0
Gravel Lane	11 10 0	7 0 0	18	10	0
S.W.					
Westminster	2 0 0	22 0 0	24	0	0
Carried forward,	467 19 4	1008 1 6	1476	0	10

work of God in these Mission-rooms. They are each tiny centres of light in dark places, but when we think of the sparks they are kindling in many a poor home around them, who will not cast a brand to keep them burning? If it were only for the forbearance, which the gospel is teaching the wives reclaimed in those Mission-rooms to shew towards their poor drunken husbands —one would never deprive them of these quiet havens of sympathy, found with the Bible-woman. "My husband has

DISTRICTS PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL DONATIONS, &c.—*Continued.*

	Donations.	Help from General Fund.			Expenditure.			
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brought forward,	467 19 4	1008	1	6	1476	0	10	
Pimlico	14 2 0	10	18	0	25	0	0	
Chelsea.....	0 5 0	9	15	0	10	0	0	
Vauxhall	7 4 2	27	15	10	35	0	0	
Rochester Row	7 4 0	19	16	0	27	0	0	
Cobourg Row.....	15 0 0	5	0	0	20	0	0	
Ebury Street	6 15 0	12	0	0	18	15	0	
Brompton	10 2 6	4	17	6	15	0	0	
Battersea	25 15 0	9	5	0	35	0	0	
Belgravia	1 11 0	40	9	0	42	0	0	
Waterworks	6 0 0	31	0	0	37	0	0	
South Kensington...	24 1 6	5	0	0	29	1	6	
W.								
Edgeware Road.....	14 11 6	20	8	6	35	0	0	
Hanover Square ...	3 16 0	20	4	0	24	0	0	
Maida Hill	45 2 6	14	17	6	60	0	0	
Percy	22 5 6	41	14	6	64	0	0	
Fitzroy Square	10 14 6	7	5	6	18	0	0	
Jennings's Buildings	10 0 0	27	0	0	37	0	0	
Middlesex Hospital	0 5 0	29	15	0	30	0	0	
Bell Street	11 8 0	12	12	0	24	0	0	
N.W.								
Camden Town	4 6 6	18	13	6	23	0	0	
Somer's Town	17 11 0	28	9	0	46	0	0	
Kentish Town	13 16 6	21	3	6	35	0	0	
Drummond Street...	1 11 3	31	18	9	33	10	0	
Agar Town	2 0 0	22	0	0	24	0	0	
Gospel Oak Fields...	7 12 0	18	8	0	26	0	0	
Kilburn	13 11 0	2	9	0	16	0	0	
Portman Market ...	29 7 6	18	19	0	48	6	6	
	793 18 3	1519	15	7	2313	13	10	

taken my gown, shoes, and shawl, to pawn—which I had been earning so gladly, that I might go to the tea-meeting,” said a suffering wife not long since.

“He may take my bonnet, too, if he will, but there is one thing he can never take from me, and that is, ‘the peace that passeth all understanding.’ I shall pray that he may find it, and I yet believe he will.”

The publication of this book has been delayed since its first advertisement until the time when, according to the habits of life in cities, many of the ladies to whom it is addressed are seeking country retirement, at a distance from London. Will leisure hours be ill employed by fair fingers in preparing what will sell at the stalls in the Soho Bazaar* for the benefit of these

* The following is a list of articles acceptable for the use of these

Missions ? and would not the owners of broad lands and noble houses, or wanderers over mountains and by seas, be happier in their enjoyments if they had some personal care for the dark alleys and courts they leave behind, where weary eyes look ever on blank walls, where no leafy tree casts its shadow on green sward ; but where still the Bible-woman's visit and hand of help may be provided—by a little of their spare gold —by some determined self-denial of extravagance in their dress ? We have more than one Mission supported by such means.

Oh, that it might be possible that the natural sympathy inducing this might, for their own sakes, react upon themselves—cause them in a quiet hour to take up the Book they have so long thought a dead letter, and see if it has not a message for them ! Can they

MISSIONS. A place of sale has recently been arranged for them at Stalls 263, 264, 265, in the Long Dean Street Room of the Soho Bazaar.

Baby Linen for the Poor.	
Embroidery.	
Irish Crochet.	
Sofa Cushions.	Anti - Macassars.
Worsted Work of every description.	
Ladies' Worked Sleeves and Collars.	

Fancy Pin and Toilet Cushions.	
Crochet Parasol Covers.	
Ladies' and Children's Night-caps, and Under Linen.	
Children's Sun Bonnets.	
Kettle Holders, Work Bags, and Watch Pockets.	
Needle and Thread Cases.	
Babies' Shoes. Bead Work.	

These may be sent (carriage paid, if possible), and the price of material marked on them, to 13 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, as usual. They must be seen by the Secretary before they are forwarded for sale.

hear its warning, that the "time is short," and that the Master calls, and yet idle away the long days of a summer that may be their last on earth ?

"And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and *the door was shut.*" It is not shut yet, dear Reader. It may be that in the pages you have opened you will see your Saviour, and that He will save you—from your present self. He gave his life to save you ; give Him "life-work" in return.

Are there no young girls in the town or village near which you reside, who, working at factories in the day-time, wander about the streets in the evening, having nothing to do ? Can you hear of a respectable and pious woman, who would, as your agent, give two or three hours every evening to call in these wandering girls by turns ? You can take a Mission-room, in some place easily accessible to them, and offer to teach them reading and writing for twopence a-night. They will value the instruction more than if offered gratis ; and thus the expenses of the room may be cleared.

A lady should receive them at first, and form the class. You will soon find that they want teaching something more than to read and write. Many of them will not know how to use a needle, and instruction in the art of cutting out clothing may follow. Do not allow any evening to pass without a portion of Scripture, pleasantly read, meeting their ear ; and close the class with a fervent prayer that the message from God may enter their hearts.

Your work will grow on your hands. Your "Miss-

ing Link," if you have found the right one, will perpetually supply you with fresh material: and if your health and opportunities allow, (if not, you can secure the services of some friend,) you will soon find your pupils willing to accept an invitation to a *Sunday afternoon Bible-class*, which will lead you to an interest in, and knowledge of, the way in which they pass the rest of God's holy day. In a single week, if God give you grace, you may have made a place for yourself in many a young heart, and have established a sympathy which will draw it upwards instead of downwards, for a life-long career of good instead of evil. Imagine the influence of half-a-dozen ladies, each with the love of Christ in their hearts, working by turns in this way among a set of neglected factory girls. Conceive, if you can, the delight of their discovery, that they are making missionaries among these girls *to each other*, and are constantly increasing their own responsibility. This is a work that will create its own monitors and teachers; but let the "rivet" of your undertaking be, that it is a **BIBLE-MISSION**. *All domestic* good will come out of it. You may thus eventually reform the morals and the habits of a district. The present race of ignorant, reckless mothers, are forming the race of daughters; and it is become imperative on us to "look at home" if we would continue consistently to send the gospel abroad.

The enemy is coming in like a flood, in the immorality and drunkenness of women. It is an increasing evil, noted by bishops in their charges, and by

political economists, with surprise. Men cannot alter it by prescriptive laws; but the influence of their sisters may in town and country.

The week now never passes in which we do not hear of Bible-Missions found needful, and commencing in some large provincial town. It may require another book to chronicle the story of their rise and progress. The Christian philanthropist may thank God for the power of the English press; for our language is now the vernacular of an eighth of the earth's population.

In what wonderful times do we live! in nothing more wonderful than in the transformations they are witnessing of those who, from the lowest depths, are being "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Though this last chapter, of necessity, includes statistics, we feel impelled to add to these a fact which is only an example of many others like it known to our Lady Superintendents. "About ten days after I last wrote you," says a friend who wishes to be nameless, "we invited the poor men who attended our 'Fathers' Bible-reading' to tea, in our Mission-room, requesting they would bring with them any of their friends in the district whom they could persuade to come, expressing the wish they should endeavour to gather them from *that* class (which, alas! teems in our streets) who never attend any meeting or place of worship—the Sabbath breaker, the drunkard, and the swearer.

"About sixty assembled. I was at the room to receive them. The poor man G——, mentioned in my former report, was one of the first to arrive, bringing with him seven others. On sitting down, he remarked to these men, 'I feel this room to be my home; the happiest hour in my life was spent here, for it was *here* I found my Saviour.' Others coming in, I lost the further remarks he made, but I could see he was pointing to the texts hanging on the walls, and contrasting the appearance of the room with the public-house on the opposite side of the street.

"Tea being finished, which they all seemed much to enjoy, a hymn was sung and prayer offered, and an address given by our kind and good lay friend Captain M——, who presided; two speeches followed from City Missionaries, who kindly attended for that purpose, and then the men themselves were invited, if they had anything to say, to speak.

"*Five* of the number responded, each one bearing his testimony to the power of the grace of God in changing the heart, and leading the sinner into a different course of life, urging upon all present who 'had never read their Bibles to *do so*, and give up their evil habits, and pray to God, and God would bless them, and their homes would be happier, and somehow everything would become *different like*.' In the best way they could, and with much earnestness, they invited all to come to the Saviour, and partake 'of the blessings they were enjoying.' The evening was one of much gladness to all. God had been felt to be amongst us

of a truth, and many said, ‘It was good to have been there.’

“I was afterwards informed we had had a great many listeners in the street, who had not the courage to be seen to come in; and one man remarked, upon coming out of the public-house, attracted by the singing, ‘Well, after all, I think they’ve the best of it up there.’ Several came to our next Bible-reading, and one of the number has not been absent a single evening since.

“A little time after this, one of these working men asked me ‘if I did not think it would be very good to have a special prayer-meeting of men, to intercede with God on behalf of some of the poor wretched outcasts in our street?’ At his suggestion we met the following Monday week—Captain M—— again kindly presiding—and a most interesting and delightful hour we spent, (we were about thirty in number.) And it has resulted in the holding of a ‘Working-man’s Prayer-meeting’ every Monday evening, to which God has given much blessing. Our strength is in prayer. One poor fellow said to me a few days since, ‘I am never so happy as when I am praying. I seem to have more courage to act for God after I have been praying.’ And there are three or four whom we believe to be earnest workers amongst these praying men—men who do not shrink from *avowing* themselves on the Lord’s side, though they ‘are jeered and scoffed at’ by their fellow-workmen; and *to the sincere and earnest men*

and women of this class do we look more than to any other human agency for the bringing in of the godless multitude around us.

"We have already had a great helper in the man G——. God has blessed him, and made him a blessing. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,' and He has seen meet to lay this poor man on a bed of suffering. He has recently undergone a severe operation in one of the hospitals. In a letter to 'Jane,' he wrote, 'I do bless God for the day I first came to your meeting. I thought of Jesus Christ's sufferings on the cross for me. While I was in such pain, I prayed to HIM, and He helped me to bear it. What were my sufferings to His; that He bore for me, for my sins? If it pleases God to spare my life, and let me go home again, I will pray and strive to lead my poor fellow-creatures to Jesus more than I've done yet.'

"One man B——, who had been brought to the room by G——, and who up to that time was a fearful swearer, visited him twice a-week during his stay in the hospital. And one evening he caine to the Bible-reading, bringing a request from G——, 'that we should remember him in our prayers, and thank God on his behalf for *His* presence and support in the hour of his great trial.' I was much pleased, though somewhat surprised, to receive such a message *through that* man, and I said to him, 'How very pleasant, B——, to be the bearer of such a message!' 'Yes, ma'am,' he replied; 'but *two months* ago I would not have brought

such a one, or listened to it.' Now he is trying to induce others to come with him, and 'hear how Jesus Christ died for such *as we*.'

"Another man, whom for three months we had been teaching to read, was sent by his employer to a 'job of work in the country ;' he told me on his return how difficult he had found it 'to try and keep up his reading,' for his fellow-workmen would knock the book out of his hand, besides using very coarse language ; and when 'I knelt to pray, they pitched all sorts of things at me, and jeered and swore at me,' (there were several men lodging in the same room,) 'but I would not give it up, and after a time they let me alone, and I prayed for *them*.' This poor man seemed truly pleased to take his seat amongst us again, telling us he always thought of us on the evening of our meeting, and often longed for the time to come when he should be able to be present. One little incident, shewing his grateful appreciation of kindness done him, I must tell you. On his return from the country, he brought a large bouquet of flowers ; and his wife told me he could hardly stop to speak to her and the children, so anxious was he to bring me the flowers while they were fresh. A nosegay from the country is always acceptable where there is but little or no garden, but, as you may imagine, the value of this was enhanced tenfold by the assurance it conveyed that a grateful heart prompted the offering.

"I would just add, for the encouragement of any lady who may shrink from coming into such close inter-

course with this class of men, as a weekly Bible-reading with them would induce, that I have never, from the first meeting to the present time, heard an offensive word from any one, and by *all* I am treated with the greatest respect and thoughtful attention.

"It is difficult to give a full and faithful account of cases that come under our own immediate notice, without introducing so much of *self*, that I shrink from doing it ; for the work is God's, *not ours*, it is *His* love that wins the people's souls, His Spirit that draws them, and the power of His grace that does the work, and to Him would I ever give all the praise. God has blessed the instrumentality put forth. The poor have had a great friend and helper in Capt. M——. We owe much of our success under God to his earnest prayers and loving interest in their welfare."

This is a district in which the prayer in the women's class has brought the men, and when *they* are converted we see how they will 'strengthen their brethren' and help their sisters in Christ. It is a locality concerning which more information can be readily given, and where some temporal help to carry out one or two new objects would be very acceptable.

We have, perhaps, hardly pressed the point enough, that these Missions now need continual and *monthly* supplies of money, to support and extend them, of something like £800. We have never had to beg for them, only truly to represent their mode of working and their results. Spontaneous help has then flowed in, from the shillings gathered carefully and hoarded till there were

ten to send together, with a blessing and a prayer, to the *hundred pound notes* from donors who choose to be anonymous, and appear the rather as directed to our help at times when God has known our need.

"I have within the last eight or nine years," writes an Irish correspondent, when enclosing a kind contribution of £4, "spent some happy days in London; yet in passing along its crowded thoroughfares, it often struck me that there were thousands of souls there passing to and fro who were entirely neglected, and my very heart ached for them. Again, in the almost gay churches, how my eyes wandered everywhere, seeking for the poor, the ragged, dirty 'common people.' Ah no! I remember but *one* who struck me as belonging to that class, being present in God's house, and he looked and listened with apparent wonder. Many who were there would, I fear, shrink from contact with such persons, although their poor bodies contain precious and immortal souls; but now my heart rejoices for your city. I may never see it again, but trust I shall meet with many a '*jewel*' hereafter, which has been plucked from the mire and the dirt; and that by means of the "Bible and Domestic Missions" "many shall be made white and purified."

What should, finally, be the result of facts like those recorded in this volume? They should not merely touch the heart and bring tears of pity to the eye, they should do nothing less than bring the reader to the study of God's own Word *for herself*—to hear His voice speaking in it *to her*—the voice of His Holy

Spirit always ready to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us.

We shall close with the words of a dear friend, addressed to the Upper Classes.* In these pages the chief attention has been directed to the "sunken sixth" of our great cities, but the Book of God has a message to the "wise" as well as to the "unwise." Sinners in silks and diamonds are of as much account as sinners in rags. In the judgment of Heaven the upper classes are as much "lost" as the lower, and they require "raising" in the most important respects as well as their inferiors. They are even more to be pitied, for, if unconverted, a heavier judgment awaits them for their misused opportunities. The great destructive sin of the upper classes is neglect of the Bible; and all who love the truth are "debtors to the wise" to persuade them to a better knowledge of it. It will deliver them from the vanity of a godless life, and shew them that Christ died in shame and sorrow, not only to save the tenants of "ragged homes," but also for "great men" and "honourable women," to lead them also into "the way of salvation." Deeply is this needed, for there is no spiritual misery in the world more direful than that which is oftentimes concealed beneath the rainbow surface of a gay and luxurious existence.

The Word of God has an especial mission to women in stations of influence and responsibility. All influence over our fellow-creatures is a fearful thing, and a

* See an article in the "Book and its Missions," for November 1860, "The Mission of the Bible to the Upper Classes."

strict account is to be rendered for its exercise. It is a thing of infinite moment to influence one soul for good or evil, how much more, then, to influence a neighbourhood or a nation. Every person of station exerts a real influence over multitudes, and this influence, by authority, opinion, and example, is given for or against God, for or against Christ, for or against the salvation of souls."

" We long, therefore, to see the 'wise' and the noble of this world brought to Jesus, and finding peace in Him, for then their position as well as their wealth will be consecrated, and they will prove to all men that the condition of habitual communion with the blessedness of heaven is habitual intercourse with the wretchedness of earth."

To every saved soul it becomes a duty to descend and read the great book of human life, all blurred and blotted as it is with sin and crime. Let woman study woman's page therein ; no work of fiction ever written rivalled it in depth of interest, or gave such scope for help. The Book of God and the book of human life are the only two books that men, and women also, must answer for *not* having read at the bar of Heaven. The one deciphers the other. It will be a sin not to have searched the Scriptures. It will be a sin not to have led all the lost within our reach to search them also. Let us have a Bible Mission, therefore, in some way to ourselves and others ! And first to those nearest to us. To our own children, our own servants—WE MUST, if we search the book for ourselves—and then, let us take up the duties that lie at our door.

APPENDIX.

[WE here insert two or three papers deemed necessary and helpful in the formation of this Bible and Domestic Agency, and also in the regulation of Dormitories and Kitchens, which friends in the country are at liberty to reprint and modify according to their own local circumstances.]

LONDON BIBLE AND DOMESTIC FEMALE MISSIONS.

GENERAL RULES.

1. The *objects* of these Missions are twofold, viz., to supply the very poorest of the population with copies of the Holy Scriptures, and also to improve their temporal condition by teaching them to help themselves rather than look to others : the former to be attained by taking payment for the Bible in small weekly instalments, and the latter by assisting them to procure better food, clothing, and beds in the same way.

2. None shall be employed in this Mission but women of thoroughly respectable character, of active habits, kindly manners, and but little encumbered with family cares. They must be communicants or members of some Christian Church.

3. The District shall be of regulated extent ; and the Bible-women shall reside in or quite near their respective Districts, having a room in a central position for the general purposes of the Mission, for which the rent will be paid by their Superintendent.

4. Each Bible-woman shall be placed under the careful superintendence of a Lady who may be found willing to undertake the work, and who is a resident in the District, or within a reasonable distance from it.

5. The Bible-woman shall present a Weekly Report of her labours to the Superintending Lady, who will receive such Report, pay the salary, and give such directions as the local circumstances may require.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BIBLE-WOMAN.

1. YOUR first work is to ascertain who are without the Holy Scriptures, and willing to purchase at a cheap rate.

2. Take with you in a bag, with which you will be provided, a small variety of Bibles and Testaments, and should any of the parties you visit be able and willing to pay the whole price at once, take it ; if not, offer to receive payment by small weekly instalments, for which you will regularly call.

3. Let your subscribers understand that you are not supplying them at a profit, but, in many instances, at a loss to the Bible Society, and that the good people who employ you are only seeking to promote the benefit of the poor.

4. You will be expected to devote five hours every day, Saturdays excepted, to your work, for which you will receive 2s. per day. The extra work of evening meetings is met by an additional salary of 2s. 6d. per week. You will follow the directions that will be given you as to the localities in which you are to labour.

5. As the Bible Work leads to other benevolent schemes, you will be directed by your Superintendent how to proceed in securing Subscriptions for Clothing and Bedding, also in inducing the poor no longer to live content with dirt, rags, and discomfort. You will then be able gradually to instruct them in needlework, cooking, and cleanliness.

6. It will be expected that you will live in or near your District, and a room in the same house should also be available for the purposes of the Mission.

7. If you are able, it is desirable that you should keep a *Journal*, in which you will give true statements of the things you meet with.

8. You will present to your Superintendent a Weekly Report of all your proceedings, at the time and place appointed, and according to a form with which you will be furnished.

9. The Lady who has kindly promised to superintend your work is _____.

SUGGESTIONS TO PROPOSED SUPERINTENDENTS OF A FEMALE BIBLE AND DOMESTIC MISSION.

IT seems undesirable that a Lady should undertake this work if she is not able to promise a fair share of time and interest to its claims, which, though at first very simple, are sure to increase in many forms. We would suggest that a Lady Superintendent do not offer her services as merely honorary or intermitting: she must be depended upon for the vigilant performance of her own particular duties.

No bills should be paid by the Bible-woman, or any material purchased except through written orders from her Lady; and great care should be taken in selection, if at any time a deputy is left in charge.

As the nature of the mission is undenominational, and it need not be conducted within Parochial boundaries—though it often may, most conveniently, be so arranged—only those can undertake its general guidance in any neighbourhood who are not necessarily limited by such considerations.

It appears desirable that the SUPERINTENDENT be in friendly communication with the LADIES' BIBLE ASSOCIATION of the locality, in order that she may confer with them on the districts in which, from time to time, this sub-agent should be occupied, and also keep up their interest in the Bible-woman's work.

Regularity of payments to the Female Missionary, with kindly, and often helpful inspection of the varied accounts she renders, should be considered a duty to be fulfilled, at least weekly, and at first even oftener.

If the people offer to subscribe for Clothing and Beds, the woman will say, "I only do one thing at a time, and the right thing first. I bring you now the MESSAGE FROM GOD, or I come to read it to you. I shall be glad also to provide you with Clothing, &c., at the lowest prices, and for this you can pay, as you do for the Bibles, in small sums weekly; but you must COME TO MY LADY to do this, at a certain hour, in my Mission-room." It is believed that if this distinction were not made, mistakes might happen in the accounts; while a particular benefit to be gained, by assembling the women at a given hour at one place, would be lost likewise.

Although it is found best that each Bible-woman should be made responsible to ONE Lady, rather than to a Committee, still, as suitable individuals may willingly come forward, saying, "What can we do to help you?" it should be the aim of the LADY SUPERINTENDENT to enlist their various activities in the regulation of special departments,

such as weekly visiting of the Clothing and Bedding Club—reading or speaking to the subscribers at mending or tea parties—purchase of clothing materials—fixing and giving out of needlework—arrangements concerning bags of linen—soup-making—timely loans—visitation of special cases, &c. All these things gradually form a part of the **BIBLE AND DOMESTIC FEMALE MISSION**; and when money may have to be expended, account must, of course, be rendered by **EACH LADY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT**.

Without interfering with any *existing* organisations, this Mission is intended to carry down among the Neglected Outcasts of society the different measures for their benefit, which have long been familiar to the Decent Poor. The lowest classes have said that “nobody cared for *them*,” a complaint which it is the aim of this Mission to obviate.

Each Superintendent will see the importance of securing funds for the temporal purposes of her particular Mission. The Bible Society commences and pays for the Bible Work by its kind grants of Bibles for sale by these women in the lowest districts of London; and, with thirty or forty pounds besides, a good beginning may be made; while the various elements of the undertaking are intended to be *self-paying* as far as possible. If several Female Missionaries are engaged for an extended district, a quarterly conference of their Superintendents is recommended, to secure unity of design, with independence in details.

Frequent reading of the Scriptures and prayer with the Bible-woman will be found her most effectual preparation for the work she undertakes. Her great power is in apt quotation; and the Lord is proving that He blesses His own Word day by day. “The entrance of Thy Word giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple.”

HOME COOKERY FOR ST GILES'S.

CHEAP SOUP, AND VERY NOURISHING.

Two ounces of dripping,	1d.
1 lb. of solid meat, at 5d. or 6d. per lb. (cut into dice one inch square,)	6d.
Quarter of a pound of onions, sliced thin ; quarter of a pound of turnip, cut into small dice ; two ounces of leeks, (green tops will do,) and three ounces of celery, chopped small,	1d.
Half a pound of rice or pearl barley,	1d.
Three ounces of salt, and a quarter of an ounce of brown sugar,	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.
Fuel to make it,	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.
Six quarts of water.	—
	10d.

HOW TO MAKE IT.—Take an iron saucepan (a tin one will not do) ; put into it, over the fire, your meat cut small, with two ounces of dripping and a quarter of an ounce of brown sugar ; shred in your onions, and stir with a wooden or iron spoon till fried lightly brown ; have ready washed and sliced your turnips, celery, and leeks, add them to the rest over the fire, and stir about for ten minutes. Now add one quart of cold water, and the half pound of barley or rice, and mix all well together. Then add five quarts of hot water, made ready in the kettle, season with your salt, stir occasionally till boiling, and then let simmer on the hob for three hours, at the end of which time the rice or barley will be tender.

This soup will keep two or three days if poured into a flat pan, but it is best made every other day. You must stir till nearly cold, when you take it off the fire, which will prevent its fermenting. A little bread or biscuit eaten with

it makes a supporting meal, much better than a cup of tea, and would go far to prevent the craving for gin.

CHEAP BEDS FOR THE POOR.

TICKING for BEDS may be bought (in quantities of not less than 100 yards) at 4d. a yard. Eight yards make a tick, and 40 lbs. of FLOCK fill it. The flock is 11s. per cwt. and upwards. The bed is sold at 7s. or 7s. 6d., according to the price of flock, and paid for, *before receipt*, by six-penny or shilling instalments.

 Cards and books for carrying on the work to which this volume refers, may be obtained by application to Messrs NISBET & Co., Berners Street, London.

THE following specimen is given of the way in which this work may be and is independently organised in various parts of the country :—

(*Copy of Circular.*)

D— BIBLE AND DOMESTIC FEMALE MISSION.

Many of the inhabitants of S— and D— being deeply impressed with the importance of establishing a Mission in their own locality, for promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor, on the principles and practices so interestingly exhibited in “The Missing Link” and “The Book and its Missions,” desire to enlist the sympathy and support of the Christian public in furtherance of this important work. The Mission will be entitled

THE D— BIBLE AND DOMESTIC FEMALE MISSION.

The design sought to be carried out, by God’s blessing upon it, is twofold :—First, to supply His Word to the poorest and most improvident of the population. Secondly,

to adopt measures for reforming their homes, by teaching them to help themselves, rather than to look to others for help ; by instructing wives and mothers how to fulfil their duties ; by endeavouring to reclaim husbands and fathers from the alehouse, and to lead them to apply that money which is now spent in extravagance or in vice, in procuring proper food, clothing, furniture, &c.

These two objects are to be sought by taking payment for Bibles in small weekly instalments ; and by inducing the poor to add to the comfort of their domestic arrangements in the same way.

The qualifications for the women employed in this Mission, as far as can be ascertained, shall be—decided piety ; that is, their hearts must be devoted to the Lord, from a sense of His love to them personally, that they may be able to commend Him to others out of their own experience. They must have practical acquaintance with the Scriptures ; ability to offer free prayer ; be of active habits ; of a kindly disposition ; of a thoroughly practical turn in housewifery ; and have some knowledge of writing and accounts.

The Bible-women shall reside in, or quite near, their respective districts ; and there shall be a room in a central position for the general purposes of the Mission, for which the rent will be paid out of the Mission fund.

Each Bible-woman shall be placed under the superintendence of a lady willing to undertake the work, and who resides within a reasonable distance from the sphere of her superintendence.

The work of the Superintendents shall be left uncontrolled while the principles on which they are originally selected shall continue to be uncompromised.

The funds for which this appeal is made will be received and administered by a body of Lay-Trustees, who shall also

appoint the Bible-women, the Superintendents, and the spheres of their labours.

The following gentlemen have consented to act as Lay-Trustees :—

P. C. C——, Esq.

F. H. M——, Esq.

P. R——, Esq.

F. T——, *Treasurer.* Captain L. T——, *Secretary.*
Miss E. B—— *has consented to act as Superintendent to the first Bible-woman.*

Members of any orthodox Christian communion, possessing the requisite qualifications, shall be eligible, either as Bible-women or Superintendents.

Those into whose hands this may fall are respectfully advised to read “The Missing Link,” in order that the hopefulness of the above Mission may be fully perceived by them; and are earnestly requested, also, to interest their own immediate circles in the matter as much as possible.

THE DORMITORY FOR WORKING GIRLS, PARKER
STREET, ST GILES'S.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

1. THAT the accommodation in this Dormitory consist of a comfortable bed, a work-room and kitchen to sit in, the use of cooking apparatus, with fire, light, and Sunday's board.

2. That no persons be admitted who are known to lead disreputable lives. Applicants are at first received at the discretion of the Matron; their admission must be afterwards confirmed by the Lady Superintendent.

3. That those admitted must express their willingness to comply with the following Regulations :—

- (1.) To abstain from Sunday trading.
- (2.) To avoid bad language.
- (3.) To pay 4d. per night, or 2s. per week, for their accommodation ; to assist in earning which, Industrial employment is provided.
- (4.) To be submissive to the Matron.
- (5.) To be within doors before half-past ten o'clock every night.
- (6.) To take care of the property they are permitted to use.
- (7.) To keep their persons and clothes clean.
- (8.) To bring no one with them into the house, except on business, and with the Matron's permission.

4. That a violation of the above regulations will expose the offending party to a loss of the advantages afforded by the house.

5. A Matron is appointed whose business it is to care for the house and property , to report weekly to the superintending Ladies ; and in every way to carry out their instructions.

Employment of two kinds will be afforded, as far as possible, to the girls who choose to avail themselves of it :—

1st, The making of bed-ticks, in which they may employ their leisure-time, and for which they will receive 6d. per tick.

2d, Two girls, weekly (taken in turn from those offering themselves), shall assist the Cook in the Industrial kitchen, during the hours it is open, and at other times in the general housework, for which they shall receive free lodgings for the week of their help, and their board on the days they are occupied in the kitchen. Their spare time they may give to bed-tick making on their own account.

INDUSTRIAL KITCHEN, IN CONNEXION WITH THE
GIRLS' HOME, 33 PARKER STREET, LITTLE
QUEEN STREET, ST GILES'S.

The objects of this Institution are :—

1. To instruct the girls of the Dormitory in plain cooking, in order to make them more useful in service and in their future homes.
2. To supply the sick and poor of the neighbourhood with cooked meat, puddings, meat jelly, beef tea, and gruel, and also to supply those inmates of the Dormitory, who desire to purchase it, with cheap and nourishing food.

Annual subscribers of £1 and under will be entitled to tickets to the full value of their subscription, on the following scale, and must on the day before the dinner is provided inform the Matron, in person or by letter, the numbers of each kind of ticket they have issued for the morrow.

The provisions will be served out from 12 to 1 o'clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and this, as well as receipt of tickets or payment, will take place under the superintendence of two ladies.

An efficient person, competent to instruct the girls in cooking and economy, has been engaged for the kitchen.

On each ticket the bearer pays 1d., except those for meat dinners, on which there must be a payment of 2d.

SCALE OF PRICES FOR TICKETS.

Meat tickets, 4 oz.	.	.	3s. per dozen.
Puddings—rice	.	.	2s. "
Ditto, plum	.	.	2s. "
Ditto, meat	.	.	3s. "
Meat dinners, consisting of meat, 4 oz., and vegetables	.	.	3s. 6d. ,

Soup, 1 quart	1s. per dozen.
Beef tea, do.	2s. ,,
Gruel, barley water, or lemonade, do.	6d. ,,

RESCUE HOUSE, 75 DUDLEY STREET, ST GILES'S.

It is especially to be borne in mind that this is not to be considered a *Home*, but merely a Rescue House—a *temporary* Refuge, where City missionaries and others may leave those whom they are desirous of placing more permanently in Reformatories.

Here they may be received simply by application to the Matron, she being informed of what is known respecting them, and remain till the requisite forms are procured, or the days arrive for their admission into any permanent Reformatory or Home.

Those who thus bring females to the Rescue House must become responsible for their expenses to the amount of one shilling a day, which includes board, lodging, and the washing of their clothes ; they must endeavour to procure their removal to some other Institution, and leave their names and addresses, in case anything should arise, making application to them necessary.

Persons requiring medical treatment must be immediately removed to hospital care.

The superintending ladies and the Matron only undertake the charge *within* the House, and that only for a *limited period*, not to exceed a fortnight.

It is intended that the persons admitted should be employed in making the clothes, which, if required, may afterwards be purchased for them by the friend who is responsible for their expenses.

PROPOSED DIETARY.

Breakfast.

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bread and butter, or herring, with coffee.

Dinner.

Meat and vegetables, or soup ; on alternate days meat and suet puddings.

Tea.

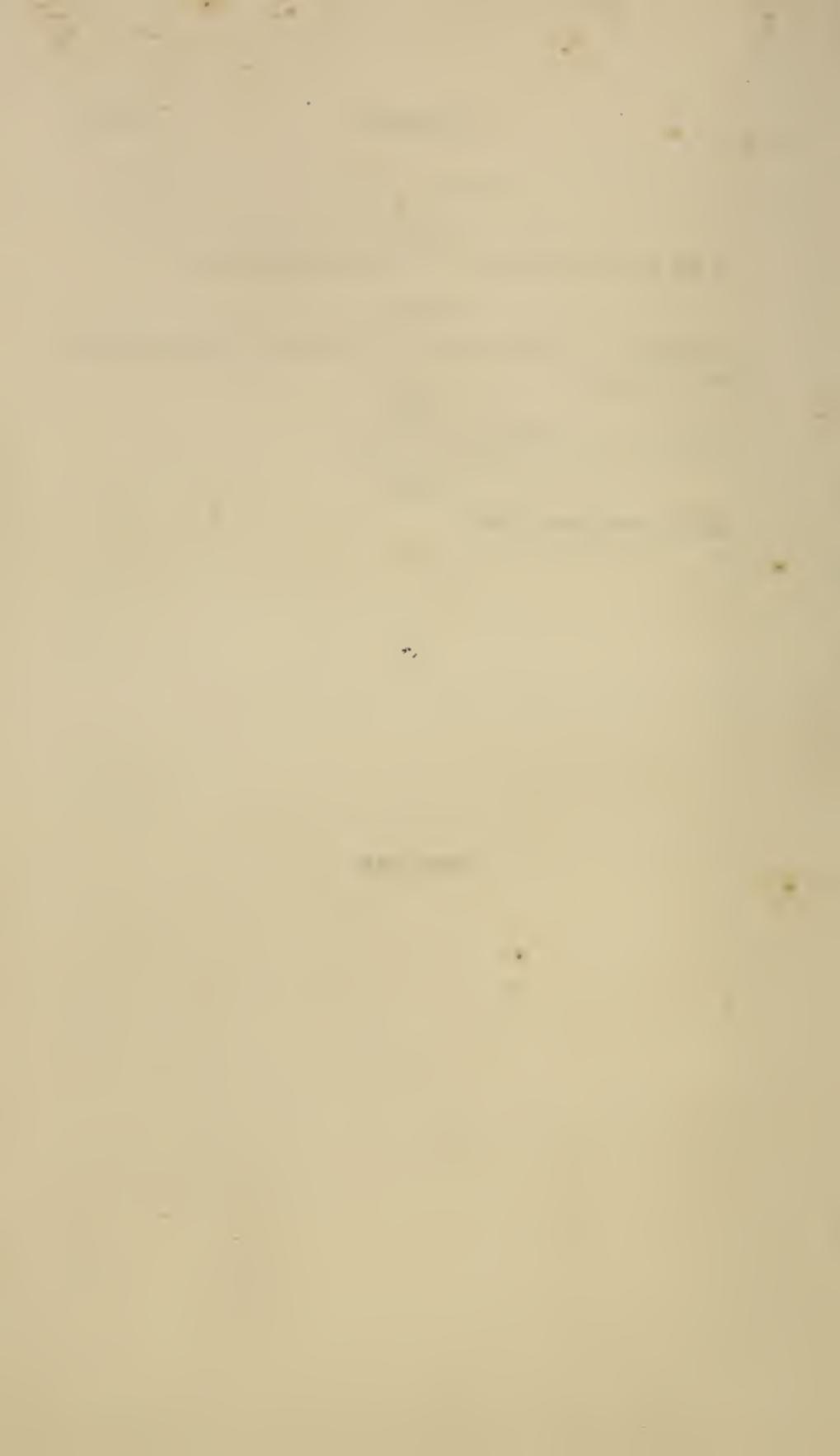
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bread and butter, with tea.

Supper.

$\frac{1}{4}$ lb. bread and cheese.



THE END.



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